

A message we (I) needed to hear
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We come together now because we know, and we insist, that black lives matter. That black lives are worthy and complex and inspiring. That every black person is unique and beautifully human, and that every black person of every age, everywhere, deserves dignity and decency and respect.

And of course, we come together because we know that these truths, and the basic humanity of people of color, are violated in our nation every day.

Last week, the example that shocked the nation was the brutal killing of George Floyd. But so many have suffered before him over weeks and decades and centuries.

Our nation is in terrible trouble. And part of that trouble is the systemic racism that is destroying us from the inside. A society that tolerates official brutality thereby, of course, encourages it.

If we hope to live in a society that is better than its worst impulses, we must use this awful moment to drive and accelerate positive change.

We must begin by insisting on full accountability for the officers involved in killing Mr. Floyd. We need to make clear to anyone who doubts it that the rage and anguish unleashed by his murder are deeply justified. We need to support the current protests, which are, overwhelmingly filled with peaceful people begging for justice and peace. And, to address systemic racism in policing and criminal justice, we must press for systemic reform. I hope we can join together in doing those outward things.

But we also have work to do closer to home.

All of us who can count on the advantages of education, money, power and even safety in our homes and neighborhoods -- all of us with those advantages benefit, every day, from a society with a racist history and a racist present. And MIT is part of that society.

This is our community. I believe it is a wonderful community. But it is our responsibility to make it better.

- L. Rafael Reif, President of MIT, (excerpted from his graduation message to Class of 2020 and the world)