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Social Justice Autobiography

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Essay on Social Justice

By Tory Glover

My earliest encounter with Social Justice resides in the memories of my grandfather. At 10 years old, I would accompany him on his grass cutting routes. My world consisted of two square miles of neighborhoods cluttered with houses and cars lining dirty gravel-top roads. The neighborhoods where he cut grass had houses that were large and spacious. Bright, shiny cars were parked in driveways or garages and the streets were clean and paved. These neighborhoods were only twenty minutes away, yet, it felt like I entered a whole new world, like I was going on an epic adventure.

Another miraculous change I would witness was the transformation of my grandfather. A somber, quiet, and reserved man become jubilant, talkative, and outgoing. It was through him that I learned my "yes suh, and no suh. yes missus and no missus."

I sensed during those outings that my grandfather's attitude towards those white people went deeper than an employer's respect. There was something different about white people that required my grandpa to give more of himself, or so he thought. And so I grew up not really knowing what that thing was, yet, I imitated my grandfather's behavior. The world helped to reinforce my actions as well.

At the age of 13, I spent the summer with my aunt up in Austin. I had meet a group of white kids at the local swimming pool who decided to go shoplifting at the store across the street.

Upon getting caught, only I, the black kid, went to jail. Then at the age of 16 a white classmate and I got caught cheating during an exam. Once again upon getting caught, only I, the black kid, got suspended. Lastly, at the age of 19 a fellow service member was caught using a racial slur towards me and, even though he was reprimanded, it was I who was transferred to a different base. These were little incidents in themselves, yet, they had a major impact in my life.

I started to develop an unconscious shame for who I was.

I started fantasizing about being white. I detested the neighborhood I grew up in, the music I listened to and the food I grew up on. I was angry at my own skin. I did everything I could to become accepted in white society. I consciously believed that if I spoke with a bass in my voice, acted more conforming, looked less intimidating that I would be accepted into that secret society where the world had showed me that life, liberty, and the pursuit of justice actually existed. There was no social justice for my grandpa so how could there be any for me?

Even today it is difficult to remove the weed of social injustice in my subconscious. If I need a word spelled or if I'm seeking information on a historical event, I find myself seeking the knowledge of a white man. And the world continues to water those weeds by showing how whites here in prison suffer less reprisal from challenging administrative policies than Blacks challenging the same rule.

In addition, I've observed Black inmates compelled to take

what is deemed as rehabilitation classes (which isn't a bad thing) yet, only whites are readily accepted into the vocational and educational courses. Charles Miller once wrote that, "blue collar-criminals apply no more intelligence than those who are conned by telemarketers," So why would whites qualify for college easier than their black counterparts? Social Justice.

Equality and Equity are the love children of Social Justice because they administer to the education and health of a community. That is how cultural identity and self-identity begins. By incorporating Social Justice into society we distribute justice adequately, fairly and equitably producing people that can see themselves not as inferior but as equal achieving life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that was never hidden in a false society.

Genre:

Social Justice Essay

Tags

Racial consciousness; racial shame; racial disparity; white privilege