

8-9-2023

Social Justice Autobiography

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Recommended Citation

Price, Jacklyn, "Social Justice Autobiography" (2023). *Writing Beyond the Prison*. 11.
<https://commons.library.stonybrook.edu/writingbeyondtheprison/11>

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Justice was created to encourage fairness. But because we're so divided, it has been perverted to something it was never intended to be. Why? Shouldn't there be more than one equitable resolution to satisfy social justice? It's not just about racial equality even though this is where it's most recognized. It's for all people who are underrepresented as a community; being Black just so happens to be at the forefront.

As a kid, I remember going out to dinner with my mother and siblings. We would enter the restaurant before some of the white customers, who were greeted with a smile. We weren't greeted at all; instead we were treated as being a nuisance, an interruption. The white families were served first while my mother had to remind the waitress that we were still waiting to be served. It wasn't until after another few white families received their food that we were allowed to eat. That's when I realized I was put into a specific category, an unimportant category.

We didn't have much money, and it was obvious by the way we dressed. I didn't understand if we were overlooked because of the color of our skin or the social class we identified with. Maybe the waitress knew we could barely afford the food, so a tip wasn't feasible.

There's a children's game called "King of the Mountain." The stronger players' job is to keep the weaker players from taking possession of the top of the hill. This is how society is designed; it separates the players into classes. We have the rich, the poor, and the largest, the middle class. In addition to classes, there is white, black, and gay (also known as the LGBTQ

community). We're all broken up into categories. No matter what community we are part of, social justice should be the same.

As inmates, we're still discriminated against, and not just outside the walls but inside as well. I'm an educated Black woman with several college degrees. I have become fluent with the law and know how to use the law library. I applied to work as a librarian in the law library. I wasn't hired. Instead, they chose an old white woman, barely able to move and with no knowledge of how the law library works. They told me I could be the orderly who takes out the trash and cleans the toilets.

Then, I applied to work in the commissary, the prison store. I didn't get that job either. It's prison policy that an inmate must have at least a G.E.D. to work in the commissary. The position was given to a white woman who has been "trying" to get her G.E.D. for the past two years without serious determination. These are two good departments to work in while incarcerated. Yes, even inmates are discriminated against. How can I become a stronger player when there's a system all around me that's playing "keep-away" with the tools I need to become better and stronger?

Social injustice begins with racial inequality, but it doesn't end there. There's only one equitable resolution to achieve social justice. Race, gender, sexual preference, or political views shouldn't matter; everyone is the same and should be treated accordingly. Everyone deserves a fair opportunity to fight for the top of the hill no matter what that hill may be.

Genre: Essay

Tags: Social justice; prejudice; discrimination; race; class; LGBTQ; Education