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Essay Contest Prompt

In 500 words or less, share an incident when you or someone you know was treated unfairly or you treated someone unfairly based on race, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, etc. Why was this judgment wrong? How did the experience affect you? What have you done and what will you do to help end intolerance and create a more inclusive community?

Please review the entire entry form. Gather the necessary information to answer all questions and return to complete your entry.

You will be prevented from finishing your entry unless all required fields are complete.

Essays are limited to 500 words; your essay will not be accepted if it is over the word limit.

If you are working from a public computer, such as at a library or school, you are strongly encouraged not to leave the computer until after you have submitted your entry as the information being collected is private and sensitive.

“Why Does Being Judgmental Matter”

This essay contest was put on by Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, The Museum of Diversity and Tolerance. It is important to notice that it is put on specifically by the Diversity and Tolerance part of the museum. This is important because it is trying to raise awareness on how to build tolerance. I believe that one of the many reasons this particular museum created the essay was to raise awareness not only for Jewish people who have been bullied but for others to openly express how bullying has taken a toll on their lives. Jewish people get bullied more often than not with stereotypical remarks, judgement based off of their noses and perceived differently because of their religion. The museum is located in Ohio where there isn't much diversity, as stated on their website. To me this means that they are trying to show people that it's okay to be different.

Not only does this essay raise awareness for Jewish people but it also raises awareness for people of other cultures, backgrounds and genders. When someone shares a story of an encounter with a bully it opens people's eyes to reflect on incidents that they might have been a bully or hateful towards someone else because they are different than them. By asking people what they will do to make a difference, this opens the writer's mind by having them find a way to change their experience and it also helps prevent future racial slurs or discrimination on others. The 500 word limit also adds an interesting construct on the essay. By limiting the word count, the writer has to get straight into what they want to say and skip all the excess wording. Also, by giving the writer an option to write about someone else’s experience with a bully the writer can

think about how bullies are everywhere and bully all different types of people. This essay was put on for many reasons but I believe the main one is to raise awareness and to stop bullying on others because they are different then we are.

“Being Different Is Important”

In the third grade, one day, a penny was thrown at me. I’ve always been proud to say I was jewish. Why? It makes me different, it makes me stand out. Being Jewish, although it's a religion, gives me a sense of belonging, gives me character In the third grade, I thought it was a cruel way of bullying someone, by throwing something at them. I was upset and pouted to my teacher when the penny was thrown at me. Years went by, and although I had not forgotten about the incident, I decided to let it go. That was until I heard someone about two years later ask my friend (who happened to be Jewish) if he wanted a penny. This immediately set my radar up and I needed to know more. I asked the immature bully why he insisted on giving my friend the penny and not to anyone else. It was there in that moment where I was informed about a stereotype that made me outrageous. The bully told me that he would have offered it to me but that my friend was richer than I was so he needed to save it more. I honestly thought that this kid was idiotic, it made no sense to me. Later that night I asked my mom, and she explained it to me. I had no idea that a penny was thrown at me because of my religion. When I found out, I wanted to not be Jewish, I wanted to be like all the other kids and believe in Santa. For the longest time this affected me in more ways then you can imagine. I stopped saying I was Jewish to my fellow peers. The bully who threw that penny at me changed my life, for the better. For years I was scared to say proudly that I am Jewish but now I say it with pride. For those who feel inferior and feel the need to throw pennies at others, I am sorry for you. You will only build our spirit’s up and make us more proud to be who were are then hurt us. It took me a long time to figure out that there were kids, like me, still being bullied.

I decided to take an initiative that still gives me goosebumps. Every month I would go to the local Jewish Community Center and talk to kids in first to eighth grade. Most of them knew me since I worked as an after care counselor there so when they heard my story it gave them

hope that there was a way to get through the bullying and come out so much stronger than they ever thought possible. After I would tell them my story, I would hold extra sessions for kids to talk one on one to me and vent. I was someone that kids looked up to not because I was jewish like them or not because they knew me, but because I went through what they are going through and I became so much stronger because of it. Hearing their stories made me realize how mean, not just kids but, humans are to each other.

Seeing how cruel and evil people are to one another makes my heart hurt for the human race. Even though we are all different in our own unique ways, we are all the same. I hope sometime soon people start realizing this and everyone makes an effort to change how we are to each other.