
Reflection on the Deep Roots of Racism Across Our Society

The problems that people face because of their race or ethnicity is an epidemic that is deep rooted in society. Racism is a horrendous ideology that believes that every person within a race has certain abilities, characteristics or qualities that are specific to that race, which are meant to show the race's superiority or make them inferior. It is important to understand that ethnic and racial identities differentiate in each country or society. I personally never believed racism was a giant issue that I constantly faced for me race was not an issue I tried to treat everyone fairly and equally as much as I could possibly have done.

However, this is what I believed before researching and reading articles on racism. The article "Black Men and Public Spaces" by Brent Staples allowed to me a sense of insight that showed me I do sometimes stereotype individuals because of their race or ethnicity even if I didn't mean to do so and the scariest part is that I do this on an unconscious level. This allowed me to see that racism is not only something that is physical and happening out in world but it is also something that takes place in our minds where it manifest as a dark shadow in the corner of our subconscious minds. People when they are not around people of their same race or ethnicity may feel uncomfortable in the situation. When people around us look differently, and dress differently from what is considered "from" the United States we may have negative connotations of them. A clear example would be an individual wearing a hijab in downtown Los Angeles and being negatively viewed as "a terrorist" since a Muslim woman wearing a hijab have been portrayed to be terrorists in news and other forms of media. Racism is something that can not only be shown publicly but subtle racism exists all around the country and world without people recognizing that they are doing it involuntarily.

We are all born not being racist its something that for many is taught throughout our life experiences. Parents for many is the first place where we get our basic ideas since they are the first to teach us to think similarly to them. Our parent's views get passed down to us which we later form our own ideas through the experiences that we were exposed to growing up. This is key to understanding that people are exposed to some form of racism at a young age and it all starts with family. We receive most of the information about different races/people through our families, through the experiences or stories that they may have experienced making this information distorted and bias. For example, at a young age when my parents and I were driving by a neighborhood known to be mainly Hispanic or African American my parents would lock the doors while driving as if they were scared that someone was going to open the door and rob them. They would also double check that they locked the doors when they would park and would hide or take any valuables with them in these types of neighborhoods because they were "dangerous" neighborhoods. The reality to this is that we should be doing this in any city or neighborhood we went since it's not the type of race of the people that live there that make it dangerous it's an individual of any race at any location that can be dangerous.

Throughout my life being an Asian male in the United States, I never took in consideration of the minor acts of racism that I have experienced or acts that I have partaken in daily. People of

color in my life experiences are the ones that deal with racism the most, not to say white people don't experience it too but they do not have to worry as much about it. Racism can take many forms it can take the form of a negative comment through a derogatory term. It can also take the form of a positive comment if the comment is made to relate back to the person's race or ethnicity. An example of this is, growing up in middle school something that I constantly heard from my peers was comments on how good my Asian classmates and I were at math. Their comments ranged from something on the lines of "go ask Zhenwei or Wendy to help you in math they're Asian", to "I want Zhenwei in my math group cause he's Asian" as if being Asian automatically made my classmates and I good at math.

Later in life when I attended high school, I had tried out for the freshman basketball team with a group of friends. Before tryouts were to begin, those trying out were getting changed in the locker room, a friend of mine pointed out that we had no chance of making it on the team. This was not because we were not good enough to make the team but for him it was because many of the other people trying out were African American. This comment now makes me a bit upset at my friend for saying this, their physical ability to play sports well had nothing to do with their race or skin color if anything they were good at the sport because of their dedication and amount of practice they may have put in. These comments never really bothered me at the time they were said since I was too young to see the sly racist remarks even if they never meant it to be hurtful.

Through my experiences in life and through the things that I have learned during my research is that the United States should not look at itself as being a country made up of different groups of people. The country should view and be viewed by others as a country made up of people, that are the same in the sense that they are the same species, this country is basically one giant melting pot. Everyone in the country is different from one and other we look, talk, personalities and values are different. Mines and many others use of stereotypes will not be changed in or week or overnight. As a nation as a group of human beings we should work together to learn of the diversity near us and be open minded to the countless ideas, and values that these melting pots of a country can provide us with, without alienating and degrading

Reflection

In this essay I felt the need to use more examples of the occasions that I may have experienced. I felt that the examples were more "fleshed out", that they connected with the overall theme/ reflection that I was trying to express. This essay I felt I had to dig in deeper and really look and analyze some of the examples that I used in order to find a deeper meaning to the situation. My essay is a reflection essay because I reflected on things from the past and analyzed them in order to find its significance to my overall theme. My theme being racism takes many forms being negative or being positive comments, my examples expressed that clearly.