

Stop Being a Bystander, Really

As stated by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, diversity is “the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization.” However, I would like to argue that diversity isn’t just a “state,” it is a way of living where different races and cultures come together to form something new and complex. Think about it, arguably the main factor that impacts an ecosystem’s success rate is its diversity in species. If you have too much of one species, you break the balance, sending all species to chaos. The same can be said about our society today. The only way to have a balanced world is through diversity. All cultures and races contribute a big part when it comes to shaping the events of the future. Like a puzzle, you can’t see the whole picture or finished masterpiece until you involve all pieces. But as we all know, the only way we’ll stick to a group is by believing we belong. This brings me to my second point.

Place is sometimes considered an abstract idea. I mean, is it ever possible to always feel like you belong and are wanted and needed. Sure, we all have some moments - either created in our heads because of awful past experiences or because of experiences we must unjustly go through day by day - when we feel the need to leave. To create a community and world where diversity forms one of the core values, we must ensure that everyone feels welcome, and at the same time called upon so they stay. Part of creating this feeling of “place” is by, again, not tolerating other cultures and races, but celebrating them. Toleration just means you aren’t bothered, or at least pretend you aren’t bothered. Celebration, on the other hand, means you care to hear their thoughts and ideas. A second part of this comes from not just “not doing” things like racism but taking a stand making sure yours and the victims voices are heard when someone or some group decides it’s okay to hurt other people just because they don’t look or act like them or just because they feel like it. We can’t be bystanders, because as shown throughout history, bystanders only support the perpetrator, even if they say they don’t. Concentration camps, like those in Europe and the lesser-known ones like the Tuna Canyon Detention Station were only possible because people decided to be bystanders instead of proactive loving neighbors.

Finally, to wrap this up, the first step you and I can take to make diversity and place a true reality is to first take at least five minutes of quiet time to reflect over our past actions and think about, not what we could have done, but instead what we can do now. Even if we weren’t the perfect role models yesterday, we can all take one step forward and transform ourselves into the role models of tomorrow.