

## **Promote Tolerance, encourage Understanding. What can I do to eradicate racism, homophobia, xenophobia, sexism and all intolerance from my community?**

Why do we hate? Is that because we have objectively judged something and have formed our indisputably just opinion? If we did, we would not hate then – we would lose interest in it and simply ignore it. Why do we hate then? The reason is fear. Let me explain: we do not normally accept somebody else's distinctiveness due to our envy for their bravery to differ. We, too, would like to be different, but we are often tied to our societies – we cannot afford such luxury of freedom in ignorant and often groundless fear to lose our social status. To prevent someone discrepant and often more talented from being rewarded or living a better life, we hate and utterly despise them. That is a gift we are given by life – our mind that forces us to stay away or get rid of everything that can shatter our peace and quiet. What can I do to change such a disconcerting side of human nature that causes incessant pangs of conscience?

I tend to suppose that the main reason of hatred is ignorance, and the solution to the problem is proper education. It should not be an education as we normally have it at schools and universities. It should be an education of the nation. People are most susceptible to influences as children, so it is much easier to force intolerance out of their heads exactly at that age. I, personally, as a newly-fledged godmother, will definitely try to teach my godchild to respect other people's right to be different, but I doubt that my attempts will be successful unless her contemporaries are brought up in the same way. That is why I am planning to speak about it with the headmaster of the school she will be going to. I truly believe that a subject like ethics, where different aspects of social (gender

and racial too) relations are to be discussed, should be made compulsory beginning with the primary grade. I also regard lessons of ethics as the best place to discuss the social qualities of democracy. Thus prepared to accept everybody's right to differ, the children will not grow into homophobic adults. Besides, I will try to persuade her history teacher to explain the reasons and emphasise the wicked consequences of racial discrimination in his/her lessons, for I predict that the problem of racism will be much more on the agenda as soon as in about 5 years time.

As means of combating xenophobia, I suggest organising nationwide campaigns. We have been seeing more and more African and Eastern people on the streets recently. This increase in migration is directly proportional to the increase of curious and often contemptuous glances. To stop this tactless curiosity, people have to be introduced to the culture they do not know. First of all, a survey should be brought out to find out the nation most vulnerable to offences. I would gladly take part in the investigation myself. After it is done, we can proceed further. We can cooperate with this nation's community and organise a week of its culture. Imagine, for instance, a week of Indian culture: listening to traditional chants, breathing in exotic eastern scents and indulging in sweets – would the glances be fearful and scornful still? I doubt that – rather, there will appear gratitude and interest, I should say. Besides, the campaign will definitely raise awareness among officials concerning their obligations – to care for the good of the people they work for. The same effect is expected with other national festivals, for

all cultures are rich and have many secrets to reveal to those outside. This could also be a way of fighting racism, but it is necessary to ensure that all inveterate racists are present at the festival and are wholly engrossed in the atmosphere. The problem is, adults are too case-hardened to accept innovations, so, as I stated above, all hope is for the well-educated youth.

I am sure that fear and hatred disappear when people see some part of themselves in someone else, so it is in the equality of educational possibilities that I see a world-wide cure for racism. Should our government ever destine some educational vacancies for students from developing countries, I would be ready to help with accommodation and I am sure there would be others who would also agree to finance their stay. Making someone in your own image creates clones; sharing your own world with them breeds mutual understanding and tolerance.

Another thing I can do when I grow up is encouraging the local radio stations to play more world music or even organising a world music radio station with commented lyrics and short nations' overviews, for only in this way will people understand that there is something all people have in common – the innate love for music.

As I have decided to carry out the "education of the nation", I have to act close to it – i.e. on the streets. I mean developing a series of stencils to be sprayed onto walls in the most crowded places, where they will be even unwillingly noticed. Besides illustrations, stencils should also contain a slogan emphasising its meaning (something like "Before war there was racism", "Born different and proud", or even the famous "Homophobia does not kill"). I can also design a series of stickers to be hung in public transport calling for tolerance to the elder people. We all will be old one day – why should we bring up those who would scorn us?

We also meet what we call "sexism" when it comes to choosing between genders to fill a vacancy. In fact, it is not always discrimination that we face in this case. The physical differences cannot be denied. Discrimination can occur when we treat people who are similar in different ways, or when we treat people who are different in similar ways. A strenuous job of a builder given to a delicate woman is tantamount to failing to provide wheelchair accessible facilities for disabled people. However, when a woman is denied an intellectual job on the grounds of her sex, it is sexism. The reason for it is the same fear: fear of having one's company set at risk once a professional has left to give birth to a child. Besides this, I often come across jokes about female drivers. I do not think them at all unfair, for I regularly see ridiculous accidents where they are to blame. Nevertheless, are not men to blame for the lack of confidence that women show on the roads? Are not we victims of the stereotypes that we create? Therefore, once again, we all need education. What can I do to change the world's opinion of these matters? I can try and prove with my own example that both things are possible to be excellent in – I want to be an architect (commonly considered a masculine job) and would like to learn to drive. I will try to combat nature and do not only an intellectual but also a strenuous job and will raise the number of successful female drivers.

Despite the fact, that I regard all forms of intolerance as innate and natural, I think them unacceptable for a democratic society. Nowadays the world has become too small and people have become too close to each other to let intolerance exist. We have to learn to find our own place in this crowded world so that fear does not make us enemies.

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