



ON BEING BROWN AND PROUD OF IT

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Discrimination should be considered a sociological blight, an unacceptable crime against society, in my humble opinion. It has come in many forms. There's: racial or ethnicity discrimination (the most dominant); age discrimination (She's a TEENAGER, so she doesn't know any better!); sex and gender discrimination (She's all that, but she's FEMALE!); sexual orientation discrimination (What?! You, join the army?? Oh come on, sister!); language discrimination (Anybody here speak Aramaic?); disability discrimination (This building is not equipped with ramps, sorry). Most of these are downright cruel, if not unbelievably evil. Imagine being redlined (read: charged more than the usual) just because you're a foreigner. Or getting pushed behind in line because a foreigner is deemed to deserve preferential treatment. Often too, the same scenario happens when somebody rich, famous or powerful is present, but that's for another story and essay.

Who's to start throwing stones? We all have, one way or the other, been guilty of playing "favorites" amongst ourselves. Who doesn't have a favorite teacher, a favorite student, a favorite child? And on the opposite side of the coin, who doesn't have a "most hated school subject", a "dreaded colleague" or a "teacher's pet"? Yep, one way or the other alright. Could be more, if we only cared to count and account.

Most of us (and that's a great many of us) have also experienced painful discrimination. Time was when people from my side of the world were perceived to be maids or domestic servants. Why, being a foreign maid in a far-off land is an honorable way to make a decent living! It's definitely nobler than peddling your physical wares online to a lecherous customer from somewhere else on the planet! Remember that racial slur on the country's medical graduates back when a particular show was really popular? Yes, people from my country have been discriminated against many times. But thanks to many hardworking achievers from all over the 7,107 islands of the nation, we have received vindication and been granted a worthy place under the sun.

Perhaps what we need to focus on instead as a people is to eradicate the negative perceptions that others have on us. Let us strive to do our best to motivate one another and work harder at reaching our goals. We might be doing work that no one else will take, but let us be proud of what we do. Dignity in labor, that's the key. We may not get rich quick, but we might as well die trying. Not literally, of course. But let us be driven to rise up against whatever challenges face us as a race.

You never know what boundaries you can work across unless you try hard. Discrimination or no discrimination, just be proud of what you are and what you stand for. In the end, that is all that matters.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Have people from your country been discriminated against? Cite specific instances.
2. Why is it typical for people to discriminate against those of other races?
3. How can the different forms of discrimination mentioned in the essay be minimized or eradicated (if possible)?
4. In what foreign country would you like to spend the rest of your life? Do you think you'll enjoy living in a foreign country a lot better? Why?
5. How does discrimination of whatever form affect people involved?