

IDEAS 92

International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students



International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee



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THE 92nd INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

We are all born equal.

Maybe, some of us may not have all the body parts that majority are us are born with, but that doesn't mean that those who're not born complete are not whole. As a matter of fact, it has been proven many times that those who have less "anatomical parts" have more heart and more brains than their more-or-less complete counterparts. Those who have less ultimately learn to optimize and even maximize what they have, making them better at what they do. It is only in the attitude that those who have less prove that they truly have more.

One can be appalled by the negative attitude that some people have regarding themselves or others. Thinking that one is not good enough may, in the right context, be deemed a more realistic way of looking things. But to pursue life with a perennially negative outlook about one's abilities does not constitute the can-do attitude that this progressive world needs. Saying "I am not as good as the next person" or "The other applicant has better chances than I have" is a humble way of acknowledging one's inabilities. However, to go on using them as an excuse for stagnating is inexcusable. There must be something one is good at, for what is the real purpose of living? It is to find your purpose, your corner in this world. It is no one's purpose to stop seeking for any purpose at all.

We can appreciate companies that declare they are an equal-opportunity-employer. This means they do not discriminate against any individual. They do not regard such things as race, gender, creed, color, national identity, physical or mental disability, and age as yardsticks of work suitability and performance. And what's with this company claim that one is overqualified for a position? It kind of makes you think that maybe they just saw something in your résumé that scared them off from hiring you.

When one incurs a work-related injury that renders them incapacitated, they are not to be discriminated against. The setting in which they were hired and their ability to do their job is never put into question. It is always possible for them to render work as they always did before. The company helps the employee remain productive by instituting measures to make it all possible. That is, unless the employee gives up entirely and decides to use disability as an excuse to leave the job.

Still, there are those rare individuals who are able to establish their identity elsewhere by utilizing what's left. All things being equal, these people do not look at their disabilities and inabilities as hindrances to finding their own corner in the universe.

It's a world where we are all born equal, after all.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define equality in your own words.
2. Is there equality in this world? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever been subjected to situations of inequality? Be bale to talk about the incident in class.
4. How should companies treat employees? Be as specific as you need to be.
5. Equality is a right. Tell why you agree with this statement.



EQUALITY ON THE SCALE OF BEAUTY

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

A year or so ago, there was this debate on whether a certain candidate could be allowed to join a major beauty pageant. The candidate was tall and good looking and possessed a great smile. Gifted with a good body, the contestant looked every bit as qualified as any other candidate. But there was a technical aspect of the criteria for applicants to the beauty pageant that the contestant did not meet: she was not a naturally-born female. Ms. Talackova was a transgender.

The facts that she had sexual reassignment surgery, had lived as a woman for at least a decade, and had undergone hormone therapy apparently did not change the single fact that she was born male. There were many that saw her case as something that could change the way we regarded transgender individuals in general: they are entitled to being recognized for their beauty as well as any other born female. With all the idle talk about equality in the world, what's to stop transgender individuals from having their spot in the limelight?

There are those who have argued vehemently that just because someone has all the equipment and even the thinking, it doesn't mean they can change what they are. Let's say we put headlights, brake lights, a horn and a steering wheel (if that was possible!) on a bike, will that make it a car? Besides, that beauty pageant was designed to be for women, naturally-born ones. The fact that the specific criteria was not met in that case, then the only resolution would be to change the criteria, which has already been traditionalized, to something that Ms. Talackova and others can find more justifiable for them. However, doing that will change everything, including the pageant's philosophy on womanly beauty and pulchritude.

Transgenders have been successful at getting their own recognition in friendlier pageants. In fact, someone from my country-make that, someone from my city- recently bagged the crown in an international beauty competition. Kudos to her and to the many other transgenders who have dared to show the world that they also have what it takes to become the world's most beautiful transgenders. Many of them have excelled in the beauty pageant arena, and this is certainly more than can be said for the true females among us who can barely summon the courage to go up a stage and speak before an audience.

I am happy for those out there who dare to make a statement on equality like transgender people do. I am not against homosexuality on any scale, as long as those that have a different sexual orientation do not allow themselves to be abused by others nor be branded noisy screaming faggots. Those who aspire to be women truly love women because they want to be like women. That's equality in action, plain and simple.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. If you were a judge for a beauty pageant, what would be your specific criteria for judging?
2. Can a groundbreaking change in criteria be more justifiable than simply disqualifying a contestant based on what has been set? Why or why not?
3. How can a different sexual orientation become a cause for discrimination in different settings? Cite examples.
4. Should there be equality between the sexes? Elaborate on your answer.
5. If you were in a situation of inequality, how would you even out everything? Be as specific as needed.



REMINISCING

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

When I was still employed by a major telecommunications company, I experienced how the labor union concept worked. The company had been acknowledged for having a highly-unionized workforce, where grievances could be immediately given ample time and a secure arena to be heard and considered. There were no unjust lay-offs or terminations. Every rank and file employee could expect generous income raises every year. Promotions happened after thorough appraisals of work performance and corresponding examinations for higher job grades. Bonuses were assured to be received by everyone, regardless of work location, job specification or grade.

Despite all these, there were still whispers of inequality in work promotions. Such talk consisted of there being favorites for superiors. I had not experienced being discriminated against in any way during that particular phase of my career. Fortunately, promotions were made based on merit in the particular department where I belonged to. This was why leaving the company after merely ten years was a huge loss for me. Although it was normal to have daily intrigues and competition on getting the boss' attention, our immediate superiors managed to show everyone that we were all equal. Being composed of a purely female workforce, our department succeeded at being the last such department to get migrated and transitioned to the country's major city. The memories that my fellow co-employees and I shared during our years with the company were all good.

Those who have stayed in the business office, which is the department that has survived to this day, have had their good and bad days. Everything has still remained equal, but the workload has increased for them. This is especially difficult for those who've been with the company for a long time. Younger personnel have been brought in, but they have mostly been on contract basis or sourced through contracting agencies. The manpower agencies supply personnel and take a substantial amount from the hires' income. The company has found that this set-up is a cheaper alternative to directly hiring regular employees. Who can blame the company? It doesn't have to deal with cases of unjust termination and other grievances coursed through a labor union. It has effectively eradicated the labor union. Employees work for its continued growth and expansion and not for their security of tenure. Because of the dearth of good jobs, there will always be applicants for whatever job vacancy there is with the company.

How I wish things could go back to the way they were in the company. My loyalty still lies with the company. It is still one of the best-paying firms there are today. If only things were still as good as they once were during our time, where everyone enjoyed equality in all aspects-promotions, salary grades, work loads-then I would still choose to work there.

End of daydream.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What would make you want to stay working in a company?
2. How do companies disregard their employees' rights?
3. Would you want to join a labor union in a company? Why or why not?
4. How can a company effectively trample equality?
5. What is the specific company you dream of joining? Why?



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