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Existing in a pluralistic world means that people encounter a variety of different people, traditions, and customs on a daily basis. In America, or the “melting pot” nation, many diverse cultures come together; thus, it is imperative that people develop a sense of peace and understanding towards others. Albert Einstein once said, “Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.” We, as human beings, must learn to understand each other’s backgrounds and appreciate that we are all different. Relating and looking past prejudices eliminates preconceived notions and allows you to see a person for who they are as a human being.

The media often portrays cultures that are not “American” in a negative light. For instance, after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centers, Muslims were targeted. The World Trade Center terrorists were of the Islamic faith, and thus many people who practiced Islam were linked to 9/11 and considered a terrorist threat to America. This can be seen in the increase of crimes committed against Muslims and also the opposition seen to allowing the building of Mosques in communities across the nation. People must be willing to learn and understand other cultures not only eliminate persecution, prejudices, and stereotypes but to also have the ability to look past the skewed media’s portrayal towards diverse groups. Acquiring knowledge first-hand of people of other cultures promotes tolerance and peace. If people gain personal experiences to base their opinions on instead of turning to the media people would be more tolerate and would better appreciate different groups present across the world.

At my school and in my local community we are supporting diversity and acceptance towards others. Organizations in our school, such as KC Harmony, allow students to actively become aware of the importance of diversity. I, personally, have several relationships with people that have different backgrounds than me. One of my friends in particular has very different beliefs than my own. I have always lived under the philosophy that while my parents guide me and set the rules, I control my actions and the consequences that follow. In my friend’s family, her parents guide most of her decisions. I have the freedom to be a part of several school events, pick what I will study in college, and eventually decide for myself who I will marry. My friend, on the other hand, is strictly guided by her parents, and most of these decisions are made for her. I, although raised in a different environment than her, understand and respect her culture and customs. However, being around this family has allowed me to learn things about what I believe in. I believe that respecting other cultures is key in sustaining healthy relationships, however, I also feel extremely blessed that I can make my own decisions and learn from my own mistakes along the way. Understanding similarities and differences between cultures helps us appreciate our own culture while respecting theirs.

The key to obtaining peace and understanding in a pluralistic world is possessing the ability to sympathize and understand other people’s complex history. Only from our own personal encounters with different cultures and different peoples can we truly learn how to accept diverse groups and learn to live as one.