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Researched Argument 2nd Draft

Discrimination in America

“The moment a little boy is concerned with which is a jay and which is a sparrow, he can no longer see the birds or hear them sing” By Eric Berne. Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. Prejudice is preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience. Many argue that these are two different words, but really how different are they? When living in the melting pot of the world you wouldn’t think words such as discrimination or prejudice would exist. Through social media and personal experience a person can come to the questions, such as are discrimination and prejudice the same thing, are they prominent in today’s culture, and how do people react to these issues ?

Discrimination and prejudice are viewed by the average person as the same word but, Saul McLeod a psychology (BSc) tutor at The University of Manchester who previously to taught A-level psychology at Wigan and Leigh College for ten years stated, a “prejudiced person may not act on their attitude” Saul McLeod. Therefore, someone can be prejudiced towards a certain group but not discriminate against them. Also, prejudice includes all three components of an attitude, which are affective, behavioral and cognitive, whereas discrimination just involves behavior. “An extreme example of prejudice and discrimination would be the Nazi’s mass murder of Jews in the Second World War, or the killings of Catholics by Protestants and Protestants by Catholics” Saul McLeod. So this idea basically means prejudice people may keep their feelings in while someone who discriminates shows openly how they feel to a specific group of people and may act on it. This same idea also shows people can discriminate and be prejudice. It’s not a one or the other scenario a person can hate in both ways. If people can discriminate and be prejudice you wonder how this could of happen? Saul McLeod stated “Influences that cause individuals to be racist or sexist, for example, may come from peers parents and group membership. Conforming to social norms means people adopt the normal set of behaviors associated with a particular group or society.

Social norms behavior considered appropriate within a social group are one possible influence on prejudice and discrimination. People may have prejudiced beliefs and feelings and act in a prejudiced way because they are conforming to what is regarded as normal in the social groups to which they belong” Saul McLeod, this ties with a famous quote by Nelson Mandela “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than it’s opposite”.

People may ask how can Discrimination be prominent in such a modernize melting pot of a country called the United States of America. Take a look into America’s history just like many other countries it took part in enslaving African Americans which lasted from the 1620s to 1865 roughly 245 years. When slavery had finally ended African Americans had another struggle to face, segregation which lasted from 1849 to 1964, ending just 51 years ago from present day 2015. This means the people of that time took part in growing the generation of today. Since individuals usually pick up racist behavior from parents and social groups according to Saul McLeod it’s not surprising to see racist Caucasian in today’s day and age. By the same effect it’s not surprising to see African American’s who discriminate against Caucasian because of their tragic history. Taking another look back into the United States of America tragic history people can see the great tension that was cause by the 9/11 attack in 2001. The attackers were Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations. Reportedly financed by Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda

Terrorist organization, they were allegedly acting in retaliation for America’s support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War and its continued military presence in the Middle East, Because of this horrendous event that claim over 3000 lives. Middle Eastern people, people who believe in the religion of Islam as Muslim and anyone who shared similar physical characteristics were looked at as criminals by the entire world for something that a small group of people did. Stated in the Voice of America news article, “When terrorists struck New York and Washington five years ago, U.S. Muslims were as shocked and horrified as other Americans, but in addition to coping with terror, many Muslims say they had to deal with the pain of being shunned by their fellow Americans” Voice of America. Stereotype is a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. According to Crash Course Psychology stereotyping doesn’t necessarily have to be negative in some cases may even be true. “When stereotyping beliefs combine with prejudicial attitudes and emotions, like fear and hostility, they can drive the behavior we call discrimination” this idea shows anyone can suffer from discrimination and people from all walks of life are capable of discrimination.

When the topic of discrimination arises people tend to have multiple reactions on this prominent issue. According to Laura Smart Richman and Mark R. Leary “Human beings are acutely responsive to how other people perceive, evaluate, and feel about them. Not only are people attuned to others’ reactions to them, but perceiving that other people are interested, approving, or accepting typically evokes quite different reactions than perceiving that others are disinterested, disapproving, or rejecting. Furthermore, positive and negative reactions from others often affect how people perceive and feel about themselves, their perceptions of other people, and the quality of their interpersonal relationships. And, over time, positive responses from other people foster psychological and physical well-being, whereas long-term exposure to negative interpersonal reactions is associated with psychological difficulties and poor physical health” Laura Smart. Still relating back to Saul McLeod idea depending on social norms related to a person circle can affect if they believe discrimination exist or cling to the idea that it’s no longer relevant turning a blind eye. Studies have shown that people tend to have subconscious prejudicial attitudes for example the science faculty community systematically discriminated against female science students across the country, they tend to get fewer job opportunity, viewed as less competent to their male counterpart, lower wages, viewed as more unskilled and less likely to get mentored. The Crash Course video even spoke of how prejudice is brought up as a way to justify social inequalities “People on both sides of the wealth and power spectrum start believing that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. This tendency to favor your own group at the expense of others is powerful, even when it’s totally irrational” Crash course Psychology. The idea connects to people who claim that “They don’t see color” which is the first thing that a person identifies you by weather it’s intentional or subconscious stereotypes are form in a person mind which may lead to prejudicial attitudes that can grow to discrimination. Discrimination, Prejudicial attitudes and stereotyping have led to the deaths of countless lives through the years; this melting pot is no different all that is shown on the news of late is countless innocent lives taken by these factors weather people want to see it or not.

Living in the melting pot of the world you wouldn’t think words such as discrimination or prejudice would exist. The records of history and countless studies that have been done on the topic of discrimination can allow a person to determine if discrimination exists in this melting pot of a country.