Understanding People Essay, Research Paper

Different people see the world from different perspectives. In our society, there will always be misunderstandings between people and those people s reactions will differ. Some choose to mope, groan, and even get angry about the way that themselves or others are treated while some decide to try and do something about it. Still, there are others who think to themselves that maybe the best way to deal with the issues among people is to try and comprehend what they mean and just live by them. As Benedict Spinoza put it, I have striven not to laugh at human actions, not to weep at them, nor to hate them, but to understand them. Authors now try to understand actions that people make instead of ridiculing them. The following explains these authors and how they have been able to identify with others.

Under the Influence is an essay written by Scott Russell Sanders. In this writing he tells how he grew up with an alcoholic as a father. His life was not at all easy. He had to deal with issues that young children should not have to deal with. In this essay he makes the reader understand what an alcoholic is and how the actions of one person who has this disease can affect himself and so many other people. Sanders does this by explaining the horror that he and his family had to go through during the years of his father s problem. The family was never sure whether they would be happy at the sight of the father or horrified by his presence. As a child, Sanders believed that his father s problem was somewhat his fault because he was not a good son. I tell myself he drinks to ease an ache that gnaws at his belly, an ache I must have caused by disappointing him somehow (Sanders 64). As he grows up, the truth comes out and he realizes that his father being an alcoholic is not his fault. Sanders understands the his Dad s problem was not his problem to deal with. It was something that had taken over his father long before he could ever stop or take blame. He learns from this. He learns that this is not the way to live someone s life, so he promises himself that he will not be like his father. He makes sure that he will never suffer the fate that killed his father.

Another essay, from Judith Ortiz Cofer, is entitled More Room . In a life filled with religion, her grandmother just wanted to be able to live her days to the fullest. Being so religious, she could not share the same bed with her husband knowing that if she did, she was sure to have more children. As much as her grandmother loved her young ones, she knew that if she kept on having them, it would slow her down to the point that someday, she would be bed ridden. That was not what she wanted. So, her grandmother told her grandfather to build a room, not for a new child, but for him. Ortiz is showing the reader that her grandmother still loved her husband, but she had to separate them in order to achieve personal contentment. After the separation, Ortiz s Mam was able to live the rest of her life in complete happiness. She gave up the physical love of her husband, but gained many years of activity and pleasure with her family. She still emanates the kind of joy that can only be achieved by living according to the dictates of one s own heart (Ortiz 86).

An essay that clearly identifies the way in which one tries to understand people is Black Men and Public Space . Brent Staples, the author, wants the reader to understand that there will always be some kind of racial tension between African Americans and white people. No matter how equal the races are, white people will always see some African Americans as being dangerous and not feel at ease around them. He is aware that this is just the way that people in general think. Staples does not actually agree with this, but he has come to accept it. Throughout his life, different situations have occurred that made him feel this way. He knew that he would always be conceived as being somewhat of a threat when one time he was walking down the road and happened to be behind a white female. Even though he did not cause a reason for her to feel threatened, she became fearful and ran away. He really did not appreciate her actions, but he started to realize some things. The way that some people act is not going to change; so he tells himself that the best way to solve this problem is to avoid the certain situations altogether. If he is walking down the road and feels that someone in front of him may feel uncomfortable, he crosses the street. He is showing his strength by being the one who avoids the problem. Sanders knows that the best way to evade uncomfortable situations is to stay away from anything that might initiate them. I chose, perhaps unconsciously, to remain a shadow- timid, but a survivor (Sanders 219).

The authors above choose not to try and get angry or complain about the actions of other people. They better themselves by simply understanding why people take certain actions. As Albert Einstein once said, Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding. These authors have all come to peace with themselves by dealing with others in a positive tone; one that is accepting the way that people are going to be, instead of being against it. Reading these essays has shown me that it is not always necessary to try and change people simply for what they do or believe in. I have now become more open minded and find it more suitable to try and understand why they have certain beliefs.