Definition – What Is Prejudice? Essay, Research Paper

Definition Essay

What is Prejudice? When a person hears the word prejudice, he or she might think it only refers to the racial prejudice often found between those with light skin and those with dark skin. However, prejudice runs much deeper than a person’s color. Prejudice is found between gender, religion, cultural and geographical background, and race. People have discriminated against others based upon these attributes from the beginning of time. Prejudice has become a complex problem in our society today and much of our world’s history is based upon such hatred. In the 1600’s, white men used Africans as slaves and treated them as if they were not human. “Colored” people were not even allowed to use the same drinking fountains as white people until the mid-1900’s. Hitler and his men killed over five million people because they were Jewish or were not their definition of “normal.” The Ku Klux Klan exists today and openly professes its hatred towards Jews and colored people. Our society is riddled with such hatred based upon peoples’ beliefs and origins and it seems millions are fighting each other for no relevant reason at all. I do believe that we can greatly reduce the amount of prejudice in our world today, yet I do not think that it will ever completely go away. Society has seemingly come to except all races, religions, and genders, and supposedly has achieved “political correctness” yet there will forever be individuals who discriminate based upon these issues. These individuals often form large groups that recruit new members to enforce their hatred of those with a certain religion or skin tone. Obviously, no one can tell these people that they cannot have their own opinions or beliefs, for they have the right to hate whomever they like. However, I believe we need to raise our children to accept all people, no matter what god they do or do not believe in or what color skin they may have. If children are raised around people who are not the same as they are, then they will most likely not think anything different of people who do not look the same as them or believe what they believe. If we raise our children to believe all people are equal from the start, then prejudice will slowly disintegrate over time. We, as the human race, need to focus on not judging people before we know them for who they are. Today, there are so many different people in this world that stereotypes are almost always incorrect, as many people choose not to be followers, but to be individuals. I know many white people who, if they see a young black male standing on the corner, wearing a certain type of clothing, will discern that he is in a gang and has intentions of hurting others. How could someone say such a thing when all they have seen is one’s appearance? The boy standing there could be a great student in school who helps others and plans to become someone important in the future. Asians, African-Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians, and all other ethnic groups need to look past each other’s physical attributes and start looking inside a person to see who they truly are. After all, personalities do not lie on the outside of one’s body, but in one’s mind. I believe people need to stop “following the crowd” and form their own opinions. I am very sure that few members of the Ku Klux Klan originally felt as if whites are superior to all other races. They simply felt as if they would fit in better and would be more popular or on a higher level if they believed such ideas. As the Klan gained members, it became more powerful and an increasing number of people felt as if their lives would be improved if they joined the group. Parents and schools need to teach children that people need to have courtesy and kindness towards others, no matter what. People join these racist and religiously biased groups because they feel it will make their lives better, not caring about the others who will be affected by their hatred. Parents need to teach their children the value of treating others as they, themselves, would like to be treated. If everyone in this world had respect for one another, we would live in peace and be able to let others believe in what they wish and accept that everyone is different. I believe it all comes down to parents teaching their children right from wrong in our world and raising them in an environment that is centered around acceptance of different ways of life and cultures of people. If we all teach our children and change our ways, sometime in our future we will be closer to accepting that a man’s character is based upon the content of his soul, not his religion, gender, ethnicity, or the color of his skin.