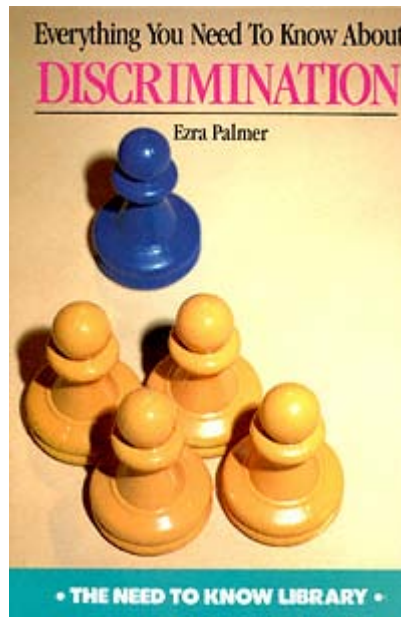


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Prejudice against racial or cultural differences often separates people from each other.

Everything You Need to Know about Discrimination

The Need To Know Library

Ezra Palmer

Series Editor: Evan Stark, Ph.D.



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Introduction

John won't let Nancy into his club because her skin is a different color. Louisa doesn't like Peter because of his religion. Lydia won't allow Claudia to play on her basketball team because Claudia speaks with an accent.

These are all examples of discrimination.

Discrimination means being less polite, less kind, even cruel to someone because she or he is different. The difference can be race or religion. It can be nationality or the color of a person's skin. The difference can even be a physical disability.

Many people have been hurt by discrimination. People have been denied jobs because of it. Others have been denied places to live. There are laws to protect people against actions that arise from discrimination.

Sometimes victims of discrimination only have their feelings hurt. Hurting a person's feelings isn't against the law, but it is wrong.

You meet new people every day. A new family moves into the building where you live. A new kid enters your homeroom class. Sometimes you like these new people right away. Someone new may enjoy the same sports that you do. Maybe he or she likes the same subjects in school, or has the same sense of humor that you do.

But suppose you don't like someone you meet? Is that discrimination? That depends on your reasons. Imagine you meet someone who likes hockey. Your favorite sport is baseball. The two of you don't have much in common. You decide not to pursue a friendship. That *isn't* discrimination. Your decision was based on your judgment of that person as an *individual*. You did not make your decision because of the person's race, religion, or color. You did not make your decision because the person was female. You did not dislike her because her grandparents were born in Japan.

We are all individuals. Each of us has likes and dislikes. We like some people better than we like others. That is okay. But discrimination deciding not to like someone because of color, or religion, or race is wrong.



The elderly are often discriminated against in our society.

Chapter 1

Why is There Discrimination?

Discrimination is defined in the dictionary as a showing of prejudice in treatment. That means treating someone differently because of something you believe about the person. A white woman sees a young man who is African-American walking down the street toward her, and she crosses the street because she is frightened of him. She is prejudiced against him because she thinks African-Americans are all muggers, and she discriminated against him by crossing the street.

There are many reasons why discrimination exists, but they all come back to one thing: fear. People are almost always afraid of what they don't know or understand, and in order to make themselves less afraid they tell themselves that they are better than that which they fear. Many white people are afraid that African-Americans will take their

jobs, so they hate them. Protestants in Northern Ireland are afraid that Catholics will make them leave the country if they get into the government, so they repress Catholics.

Anyone who is educated knows that African-Americans are not out to steal jobs from other people, just as everyone who is educated knows Catholics in Ireland do not want to kick the Protestants out. However, many people don't take the time to get to learn the unknown; they just hate it. They make judgments based on false beliefs instead of on facts. They discriminate.

Most of the time, the *majority* of the people discriminates against the *minority*. The majority is the biggest group of people, and minorities are smaller groups of people. Political control is usually in the hands of the majority, who can then legalize discrimination against minorities. However, in South



Slavery was one of the worst kinds of discrimination.



Nelson Mandela

Leaders in the Fight Against Discrimination

Usually the majority in a society makes rules that discriminate against the minority. However, in some societies the opposite is true. For instance, in South Africa, there are nearly four blacks to every white. But

through a system of rules called *apartheid*, whites once had complete control of the society.

Apartheid was a policy of strict racial *segregation* that discriminated against blacks or other racial groups. Segregation means the separation of people on the basis of race. People could only shop in certain stores, only eat in certain restaurants, only live in certain places, based on their skin color. Apartheid was discrimination imposed and controlled by the government.

Until recently, everything in South Africa was segregated. Stores, hospitals, even entire sections of the city were classified as for whites or for blacks. Blacks could not hold certain jobs, could not own property, could not vote. They were not considered citizens by the government.

However, the country is changing. In February of 1990, Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress (ANC), was released from prison after 27 years. Through his efforts, and the efforts of many other brave leaders, talks were arranged between Mandela and F. W. de Klerk, then president of South Africa. Finally, in April of 1994, South Africa had its first free elections ever, with the entire population voting. Mandela was elected president, with de Klerk as his vice-president.

Africa the opposite has been true. The white minority has had political control, and until recently blacks were severely oppressed by a system of apartheid. Happily, South Africa just held its first free elections. The system of apartheid is over.

There are many examples of discrimination in the United States. African-Americans, Latin Americans, Asians, and Native Americans are all often victims of racism. Sometimes, whites feel racism too. Women are often the victims of discrimination through sexism. Homosexuals are the victims of discrimination through homophobia. And every religious group has felt discrimination.

Most discrimination is illegal in the United States. If someone doesn't hire you because of your sex, doesn't let you eat at a restaurant because of your religion, doesn't let you buy a house because of your color, he or she is breaking the law. But not all discrimination is illegal. Acting hatefully toward someone, saying mean things, or being prejudiced is not illegal. When the white woman crossed the street to avoid the young African-American, she was not breaking the law. But can you imagine how her prejudice made the young man feel?

Chapter 2 Individual Rights

How did prejudice and discrimination begin? No one really knows. It is likely that as long as man has been on earth, discrimination has been on earth too. The Bible, for instance, tells the story of how the Jews were slaves in Egypt. Today, however, most discrimination is against the law.

How did that change happen? It began a long time ago, with the idea of *individual rights*. Individual rights include *civil rights*, such as the right to vote or run for political office. They also include *social rights*, such as the right to choose where to live and work

About 700 years ago, there were no such rights for most people. That time in history is called the Middle Ages. Only the rich and powerful people in society had any rights. They were the "nobles." The majority of the people were either common freemen or serfs. Freemen had little power and few personal rights. Serfs had even fewer. Whatever rights the nobles, freemen and serfs had were not written down anywhere.

The first step in the fight for individual rights came in England in the year 1215. King John had become unpopular. Taxes were high. Sending men to fight in faraway lands was dangerous and expensive. Nobles and peasants were fighting for England in wars. The nobles had to supply everything. And they had to follow King John's orders no matter what the result. The nobles of England banded together. They thought the king was abusing his power. The nobles forced King John to sign the Magna Carta, or "great charter." It was a small step toward ending discrimination. But it was an important beginning.

The Magna Carta gave freemen the right to a trial by jury. But it didn't really help the average person. It released the nobles from many of King John's harsh laws. It allowed the nobles to elect people who would share some of the



The signing of The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.
It includes the idea that "all men are created equal."

power with the king. Those elections were the beginning of a new system of government.

From that beginning, the idea of equality began to grow. As the years passed, others in England were given the right to vote and to help make laws. Then, in 1689, England passed its Bill of Rights, which gave many rights to its citizens.

Less than a hundred years later the people of the United States of America were fighting for independence from England. The idea of equality was very important to the early Americans.



Susan B. Anthony

Leaders in the Fight Against Discrimination

Susan B. Anthony was born in 1820. After finishing her education she worked as a teacher, and then she managed the family farm.

Susan B. Anthony was opposed to slavery and worked to end it. She realized something very important.

Some abolitionists, even though they were against slavery, discriminated against women. Anthony decided to work to end that discrimination.

Susan B. Anthony helped to found the American Equal Rights Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association. In 1872, she was arrested for trying to vote.

Her dream of winning the right to vote for women finally came true. But Susan B. Anthony did not live to see it. She died in 1906, fourteen years before the passage of the 19th Amendment. The amendment gave American women the right to vote.

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote: "All men are created equal."

Jefferson was also one of the men who wrote the guiding rules for the United States, the Constitution. They also wrote the first ten additions, or "amendments," to the Constitution. These additions are called "The Bill of Rights."



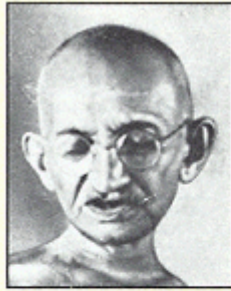
Most people, once they get to know each other,
find they have many things in common.

But even with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, citizens of the United States were not truly equal. Most blacks were slaves. The free blacks didn't have equal rights. Women, too, were discriminated against. They weren't allowed to vote. Under the law, the property of married women belonged to their husbands.

As the years passed, more and more people in the United States began to believe that slavery must end. These people were known as abolitionists. They wanted to abolish slavery. But the people in the southern states did not want the system to change. Their economy depended on slave workers.

When Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States, the southern states split away to make their own country. This was the beginning of the American Civil War. In 1863, in the middle of the war, Lincoln declared all slaves in the rebel states were free. This was called the Emancipation Proclamation. But the war was not over. The southern states followed their own rules. Slavery did not end until the North had won the war.

Slavery is one of the most terrible forms of discrimination. It deprives a person of his or her freedom, of all individual rights. In the United States slavery was based on race. Blacks were brought from Africa by slave



Mohandas K. Gandhi

Leaders in the Fight Against Discrimination

Mohandas K. Gandhi was born in India in 1869. He is known as one of the most famous fighters for individual rights. Gandhi developed a new way to fight discrimination. He did not believe in using violence.

Gandhi's nonviolent protest method was called "civil disobedience." This method has been studied and used by many leaders in the fights for civil rights. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a famous leader who followed Gandhi's teachings.

In 1893, Gandhi joined an Indian law firm in South Africa. Soon he was using nonviolent protests to fight discrimination. He returned to India in 1914. There Gandhi led the fight for independence from England.

Gandhi also fought discrimination by Hindus against Moslems. The Moslems were a minority in India. He worked to improve the status of the "untouchables." They were the lowest caste, or class, in India. Untouchables suffered greatly from discrimination.

Gandhi was killed in 1948, just one year after India won its independence.



Ku Klux Klan members march in Houston, Texas, under police protection.

But ending slavery was just one step on the way to ending racial discrimination. After the war, some states set up special rules. These rules made it impossible for African Americans to vote or to travel without permission.

To stop these new rules, new amendments to the Constitution were passed. The 15th Amendment was one of them. This amendment gave African Americans the right to vote. African Americans were elected to many offices. Some were elected to Congress. That success made some whites angry.

The new amendments made it illegal to discriminate against African Americans. Angry whites found a new way to show their prejudice. They formed secret groups, such as the Ku

Klux Klan. They tried to frighten African Americans, and to keep them from voting. The groups did not like Catholics, Jews, or people from foreign countries. They often bullied members of these minorities. Many ugly things happened, including violence and murder. Some of the hate groups still exist today.

Since the Civil War, part of the fight against discrimination in America has taken place in the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. It is the most powerful court in the United States. A decision by the Supreme Court affects every state and concerns every citizen.

The Supreme Court has made many decisions on cases about discrimination. A new case has often resulted in a decision overturning a law that was made before. That means a new law replaces an old one. In 1892, the Supreme Court ruled that blacks could be forced to sit in separate train cars from whites. The court said that as long as the cars were the same, segregation was legal.

But in 1954, the court tried a similar but different case. They decided that "separate but equal" was not fair. They ruled that segregation in schools was not legal, even if the schools were exactly equal. This was a very important decision. If "separate but equal" was not legal for schools, it was not legal for anything.

The year after that, an African American woman named Rosa Parks made history. On her way home from work in Montgomery, Alabama, she sat in the front section of the bus. Only white people were supposed to sit there. She was told to move. She refused, and she was arrested. Her arrest led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott. African Americans refused to ride buses until they could sit where they pleased.

That was the beginning of the American civil rights movement in the 1950s. The movement achieved great things. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964, ten years after Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus. Segregation in restaurants, parks, hotels and other places was made illegal. One more type of discrimination was ended.

But discrimination against African Americans was not the only issue. While African Americans were fighting for freedom, women were fighting too. They were seeking equality. Women did not suffer the cruelty of slavery, but they had hardly any more rights than slaves. They had little choice about their lives.

The focus of the women's fight was the right to vote. Women also fought for better pay and the right to own property. But the fight was long and slow. It was not until 1899 that any women won the right to vote. And only one state allowed that, Wyoming. Another 21 years



Martin Luther King, Jr.

Leaders in the Fight Against Discrimination

The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., is the best-known civil rights leader in American history. He was born in 1929. King studied the philosophy of Gandhi. He saw that nonviolence could be an important tool in the fight for civil rights.

In 1955, King became famous as the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

In the following years, King led marches and demonstrations. He traveled widely, making stirring speeches. Martin Luther King, Jr. called for an end to discrimination in the United States. He was harassed, threatened, and often arrested. But the cause of civil rights in America attracted international attention under Dr. King's leadership. And the American civil rights movement inspired victims of discrimination around the world to action.

In 1964, King won the Nobel Peace Prize. Four years later, he was killed. In 1983, his birthday—January 15—was declared a national holiday in the United States.

passed before women in every state were allowed to vote.

Women and African Americans have fought against discrimination. They have won many of their battles. Their success has inspired other groups. The physically handicapped, American Indians, Hispanics, Asians, and many other groups are now fighting too.



In a democracy, people are free to worship as they wish.

Chapter 3

Racism and Religious Discrimination

Both racism and religious discrimination are very common. They've been around since the beginning of time. In the Bible, the Egyptians treated the Jews like cattle. In ancient Greece, everyone who was not Greek was considered a barbarian. The Romans tried to stamp out Christianity, and later through the Inquisition the Christians tried to stamp out everything that wasn't Christian. The Saxons invaded England and enslaved the native Gaels. Then the Normans invaded and enslaved the Saxons. The countries of Europe decided to "civilize the barbarians" of Africa and the Americas and destroyed

many thriving cultures in the process. In World War II, Hitler led Germany in an attempt to exterminate the Jews, killing more than six million people.

Discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion is not new, nor is it uncommon. Nor is it a thing of the past. In the US today, many citizens are in favor of halting immigration, because they think that immigrants are taking their jobs. These citizens seem to have forgotten that unless they're Native American, their family immigrated here too.

Perhaps the people who have suffered most in the US are African-Americans. They arrived here, for the most part, as slaves, and fought for their freedom. It is illegal to practice discrimination on the basis of race. However, they are still discriminated against. As a result many African-Americans are poor. Racists believe that African-Americans are lazy and don't want to work. So they don't give African-Americans jobs. So they stay poor. They are kept in poverty because of the false beliefs created by discrimination.

Jews have been persecuted throughout history. Because their religion has no laws against usury, or taking interest on loans, and the Christian religion does, in Christian nations Jews have often found work as bankers. Because of that, many people believe Jews are greedy.

Some beliefs about Jews are obviously wrong: Why would practicing a certain religion cause you to grow horns? Yet that's what many people have

believed in the past.

In Nazi Germany, Jews were persecuted to the extreme. In the Holocaust, they were driven from their homes and forced to live in "ghettos" that they were not allowed to leave. Jews were forced out of their jobs. Families were split apart. Many starved. Then the camps began. Millions of Jews were herded like cattle into cargo trains and taken to concentration camps, where they were systematically killed in gas chambers. And the Nazis didn't hate just Jews. In the camps were also homosexuals, Catholics, gypsies, Communists, or basically anyone who didn't agree with the Nazis. More than six million people were slaughtered like animals.

Some people choose to believe that the Holocaust never happened. These people must never have seen the identification number tattooed on the arm of a camp survivor, must never have seen the camps in Eastern Europe preserved until today as museums, must never have talked to one of the soldiers who, at the end of the war, freed the starving prisoners from the camps. If they had, they would never say something so hateful as "The holocaust was a hoax."

Racism and religious discrimination are wrong. They are hateful and ignorant ways of thought. Not every Mexican is a wetback, not every African-American is a drug dealer, not every Native American is an alcoholic, not every white is a bigot. Not every Protestant is a snob, not every Jew is greedy, not every Catholic is a papist, not every

Muslim is a fanatic. And anyone who thinks that an entire ethnic or religious group can be described with one statement obviously hasn't thought about it very much.

Remember

It's important to remember history. We cannot forget about the Holocaust, or slavery, or the Inquisition. There is a famous quote: "He who does not remember history is doomed to repeat it." For example, the Jews were not the first to be put into concentration camps. Camps of the same sort were used in South Africa, in South America, and even in the US. While America was fighting against the Nazis in World War II, the government forced Japanese-Americans on the West coast to move into camps. The government was afraid the Japanese-Americans would become spies for their country of ancestry. These Japanese-Americans lost everything they had before the war. Their lives were completely destroyed.

We must remember the past because if we don't, it will happen again. We cannot allow that to happen.



The fighting between the Christians and the Muslims in Beirut, Lebanon, has caused many hardships for the people.



Equal opportunity in housing is ensured by law.

Chapter 4 Fair Housing

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made segregation illegal. But some forms of segregation have continued. Unfair housing is one of the areas where discrimination still occurs.

Sometimes, for example, African Americans are prevented from moving into certain neighborhoods. Real estate agents might tell them no houses or apartments are available in a particular neighborhood. In truth there may be houses available, but the agents may only show the property to white people. Occasionally, banks refuse to give minority people loans to buy a home.

Fair housing groups are fighting back. But it is sometimes hard to find out about this form of

discrimination. Meet the Williams family. Listen to their story.

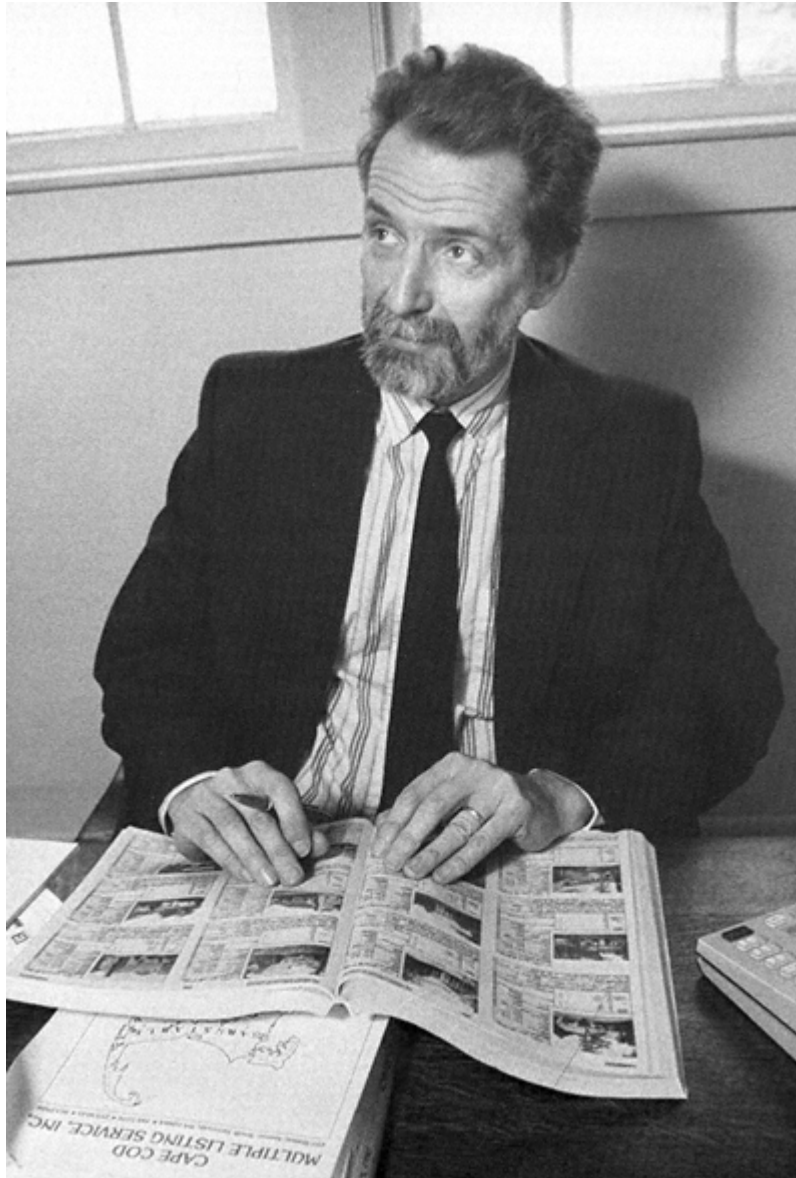
Everyone in the Williams family was nervous and excited. Mr. Williams had found a new job in another city. The family would be moving soon. But first the Williams family had to find a new home.

Joe Williams was 13 years old. He wasn't sure he wanted to move. He was happy that his father had found such a good job. But he would miss his friends from the neighborhood. He didn't want to leave them behind.

His mother told him not to worry too much. "With your father's new job, we will be able to have our own house with a yard. We won't have to live in an apartment," she said. Joe was still nervous and upset.

One Saturday afternoon, Joe and his family drove to their new city. They were going to look for a new home. It was a long drive. Joe noticed that his father seemed a little nervous. His mother was talking a lot, as if she were nervous also. This surprised Joe. He did not understand why his parents were scared. They *wanted* to move.

At last they arrived in the new city. Mrs. Williams looked at maps and gave Joe's father some directions. "I did a little research," she said. "This neighborhood is safe, mostly families with young children. And it has good schools. The prices of the houses are just right for us."



Agents cannot refuse to show houses or apartments to people because of their race or religion.

Joe looked out the window. There was a lot going on in the neighborhood. The streets were great for riding bicycles. He saw kids out on the sidewalks walking dogs and skateboarding. The grown-ups were washing their cars or mowing their lawns. Joe began to feel much better. He had always wanted a dog, but his folks didn't want to have one in an apartment. Maybe after they moved into a house, things would be different.

But Joe suddenly began to feel nervous again. He stared at the people on the street. None of them looked like him or his mother or father or sister. He was different from all the people in this neighborhood.

"Why aren't there any people here who look like us?" Joe asked his parents.

"Don't worry, Joe," his mother said. Then she saw a real estate office. "We'll go in and see if they have any houses for us to look at."

The family went inside and met the real estate agent. He was friendly. He asked what sort of house the Williams family was looking for. Mrs. Williams said she would like a house with three bedrooms. Sarah, Joe's sister, said she would like a yard. Joe thought about it for a minute. Then he said that he would like the house to be on a quiet street without too much traffic. That way he could ride a bike or play ball. Joe's father told the real estate agent what he thought he could afford to pay for a house.

The real estate agent nodded and took out some big notebooks. He looked at page after page after page. Joe saw that each page had a picture of a house. Joe was surprised by how many houses were in the book.

But the real estate agent closed the books after a while. "I'm sorry," he said. He shook his head. "We don't have anything that fits your needs."

Joe's father looked angry. His mother looked angry, too. "We've seen lots of ads for houses that we would like," she said.

"Sorry," the real estate agent said. "Maybe some other agent will have something in your price range."

Joe's mother took a newspaper ad from her pocket. "What about this house?" she said. "This one sounded just right for our family."

"Sorry," the agent said. "That has been sold already."

Joe's father stood up. "Come on, kids," he said. He looked very angry.

Out on the street, Joe was sure that people were looking at him. They acted as if they had never seen anyone who looked like him before. He wanted to tell his parents that people were staring at him. But his mom and dad were busy talking to each other.

The Williams family went down the street to another real estate office. The real estate agent there seemed friendly at first. Mr. and Mrs.

Williams described to her what kind of a house they were looking for. This time, the agent didn't even take out any books to look at. She listened for a while and then said, "I'm not sure this is the best neighborhood for you. You want good schools for your children and...."

Joe's mother interrupted the real estate agent. "This neighborhood has some of the best schools in the city," she said. " It also has a fine library and a lovely park nearby. I know because I've been researching the area."

The real estate agent looked embarrassed. She didn't expect Mrs. Williams to be so well-informed. When she started to say something, Joe's father stood up and said, "We're leaving."

Joe felt hurt and angry. He and his family had faced discrimination. They were being kept from living where they wanted to live, simply because they looked different.

Chapter 5 Stereotypes

Originally, a *stereotype* was a one-piece metal printing plate, like a cookie cutter. It made hundreds of pages of text that were exactly the same. And in a sense that's what "stereotype" means now. It means thinking that everyone of a certain group is exactly the same, like cookies from a cookie cutter. Everyone of the group has the same characteristics. If you use a star-shaped cutter, all the cookies will be shaped like stars. You won't find any heart-shaped cookies.

Everyone has some kind of grouping they accept. You might think that everyone who wears glasses and loafers is a nerd, or that everyone with dyed hair is a freak. It's natural to make some kinds of groups,

like "nerd," or "jock," or "freak." Everyone needs some kind of grouping system in order to figure out relations between people. Your clothing, your walk, even your speech pattern groups you with a particular kind of person.

These stereotypes become a problem when you do not change them for anything or anyone. If you see a person wearing a football jacket and decide he's *probably* a jock, but you don't really know, then you are grouping. If you see a person wearing a football jacket and decide he's *definitely* a jock, a neanderthal, stupid as a door and totally not worth your time, even though your best friend says he's actually pretty cool, then you are stereotyping.

Stereotyping becomes even worse when you stereotype a group of people because of a physical characteristic. For example, the guy wearing the football jacket probably is a jock because he chooses to dress that way, and that kind of clothing is a signal to others that says "jock." However, no one chooses their skin color, or their sex, or to be disabled, or their sexual preference. There are all kinds of people in every group. Personality is not determined by appearance.

To say that all blacks are good at sports is stereotyping. Many blacks are good at sports. Many whites are as well, and so are many Hispanics, Asians, and Arabs. To say that all women are weak and gentle is stereotyping. Some women are weaker and gentler than some men. But some are stronger



More women are entering professions that used to be reserved for men only.

and tougher than some men. It depends totally on the individuals. To say that all gays are effeminate and all lesbians are masculine is stereotyping. Once again, that may be true of some individuals. But not everyone in the group.

Stereotyping allows for no exceptions. Everyone in the group is considered the same, no one can be different.

Not all stereotypes seem harmful. Some appear to be positive. They sound like they are compliments to a certain group. For example, what's so bad about saying that all Asians are good in math?

First of all, it's not true. Not all Asians are good in math. Many are. Many are not. It's ignorant to believe something that's a lie.

Second, if you were an Asian who wasn't good in math, how would you feel about it if all Asians were supposed to be so good in math? You would feel like there was something wrong with you. You might think you were really stupid if you couldn't even do what your race is supposed to be so good at.

Your teachers might believe in the stereotype and get angry at you for not being good at math. Your classmates might make fun of you for not being really Asian if you couldn't do math.

Third, someone who believes that all Asians are good in math probably doesn't think that they're good in anything else. They would think that an Asian couldn't be a writer, or a historian: Asians are good at math. This kind of prejudice could make it

very difficult to pursue a career that is not centered around math.

Fourth, such a stereotype fosters discrimination. People who believe that all Asians are good in math become resentful of them and think that Asians are taking their jobs in math and science away from them. Students might become prejudiced against Asians because they think Asians blow the grade curve.

Stereotyping is very dangerous. It's very easy to become lazy and accept the stereotype in place of the person. Stereotypes can be found everywhere in our society, from ethnic jokes to predictable characters in sitcoms. Why are African-Americans and Hispanics always the bad guys? Why are Asians always the nerds? Why are women always ditzy? Why are homosexuals always the comic relief? Because people who write television shows know how to play off a nation's stereotypes to get higher ratings. Unfortunately, these shows just reinforce the prejudices that are so unhealthy to society.



It is against the law to discriminate in hiring because of sex.

Chapter 6

The Rights of Girls and Women

Girls and women have had to fight many kinds of discrimination. And much progress has been made. Girls are now able to participate and compete in activities, such as many sports, that they were excluded from in the past. More and more women are entering the work force. Many of these women have important positions and are paid high salaries.

But there is still prejudice and discrimination against women. Women are concerned about many instances where discrimination is practiced. For example, women in the work force still earn far less, overall, than men do. Working women are also concerned about affordable child care.

Women as a group express concern about their own bodies. Many women feel that they have a legal right to end a pregnancy (have an abortion) if they choose. Others disagree.

One issue that women have become especially troubled about is *sexual harassment*. Sexual harassment happens when someone makes you feel threatened sexually by making lewd (sexually crude) remarks, teasing, touching, asking for favors, or promising favors. It is even more of a problem when the person who harasses a woman is in a superior position, like a boss or a teacher.

In 1991, Clarence Thomas was nominated for the United States Supreme Court. A committee of senators held hearings to determine whether or not he should be approved for the Court. During the hearings, a law professor named Anita Hill accused Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment. She said the harassment had happened when they had worked together several years before.

Eventually, Clarence Thomas was approved for the Supreme Court. Many people did not believe the things Anita Hill had said. But many women felt she was very brave, and that the senators had treated her badly. She put herself in a difficult position. But she also made many people think about the issue of sexual harassment.

Discrimination based on sex can happen to girls and young women, too. Here's a story about one girl's experience with job discrimination.

Kate James had a problem. Christmas was coming and she didn't have enough money for presents. She made a little money baby-sitting, but that was not enough. She needed a job that would pay her every week.

She talked with her parents one night after dinner. She told them why she wanted to earn money. They said that Kate could get a part-time job after school. She could also work on Saturdays.

"But you can only work three hours a day," her father said.

"That's right," said her mother. "You have to save some time for doing homework. And you need time to eat and sleep!"

Kate went to her room. Now she had to figure out what kind of work she would like to do. She had friends who worked in restaurants, but she wasn't sure she wanted that kind of job. She liked being outdoors after school, even when it was cold.

The next day she walked past the supermarket. She glanced up at the plate-glass window. It was filled with colorful signs advertising the prices of foods. One small sign caught her eye. "Delivery boy wanted," the sign said. "Must be able to work from 4 to 6 on weekdays, also Saturday mornings."

She almost jumped for joy. It was the perfect job for her. She rushed inside and asked to see the manager of the store.

The manager worked in a little office that looked out over the cash registers. He was so tall

that it was hard to believe he could fit into the tiny office. But he had a friendly smile. He shook Kate's hand and gave her an application to fill out.

Once she had filled out the application, the manager asked her a few questions. He wanted to know about the classes she took, and which ones she liked best. He asked about her parents and where they lived.

Before Kate left, she told the store manager about her interest in sports. "I'm a fast runner and bike rider," she said. "I play basketball and soccer at school. I bet I could be your fastest deliverer."

The store manager laughed and shook her hand again before Kate left. "I'll call you in a day or two to let you know what I decide," he told her.

Several days passed and Kate didn't hear from him. After a week, she asked her father what to do. "Go over to the store and find out," he suggested. "Maybe the manager has been too busy to call you.

Kate hopped on her bike and rode to the store. She was about to walk in when she got a surprise. Ted Simpson, a boy in her class, was loading a box of groceries into a delivery cart. "Ted!" she said. "I didn't know you worked here."

"I just started today," he said. "I applied for the job yesterday, and today I started working."

Ted left with the cart. Kate thought about it. She had applied for the job last week. Ted applied for it yesterday. Why had *he* gotten the job?



Some employers still make decisions based on their prejudice rather than on the applicant's ability.

Women's Rights in America

1848 Seneca Falls Convention. More than a hundred men and women gathered in Seneca Falls, New York. They issued a "Declaration of Sentiments." It was similar to the Declaration of Independence. Instead of saying, "All men are created equal," it said, "All men and women are created equal."

1920 Passage of the 19th Amendment. After a long fight, women won the right to vote in every state.

1923 Equal Rights Amendment Introduced. This document said simply that there should be no discrimination on the basis of sex. It did not pass.

1965 National Organization for Women founded.

1973 Equal Rights Amendment Introduced Again. Again, after years of fighting, it did not pass. It was defeated in 1982.



Suffragettes marching

Kate went in to see the store manager. "I'm sorry I didn't call you," he said. "It just seemed the job was better suited for a boy. I'm sure you'll find some other job."

Kate wasn't so sure. The more she thought about it, the more upset she became. Ted Simpson was no bigger or stronger than she. In fact, she could probably push a cart or ride a bicycle *faster* than he could. It just wasn't fair!

On the way home, Kate looked in store and restaurant windows. No one seemed to be hiring at the moment. Now she would not have enough money for Christmas presents.

Kate's feelings were hurt. And she was angry. The store manager did not even give her a chance. He never tested her strength or speed. He thought she could not do the job just because she was a girl.

Kate had faced discrimination. Someone had judged her on the basis of her sex, not her individual ability. She felt sure she was strong enough to do the job. She had a good attitude and was willing to work hard. Now, because of discrimination, she would not get the chance to prove it.



Physically disabled people should be judged only on the basis of their ability.

Chapter 7

Sometimes it's Painful to be Different

Discrimination can hurt people. Real estate agents did not want to sell a house to Joe's family. The family was unhappy and disappointed that they could not live where they wanted. The store manager didn't give Kate a job because she was a girl. Kate was angry and frustrated that she was not given a chance to prove herself. Kate and Joe were not judged as individuals. They were victims of discrimination.

Other Forms of Discrimination

Luis Sanchez loved to sing, and he had a very good voice. He knew how to read music. He had taken piano lessons, and he sang in his church choir.

One reason Luis worked so hard on his music was that he had a brace on his leg. He walked with a limp, and it was difficult for him to run. Luis had a physical disability. So he spent most of his time practicing his music.

Mr. Moore, the music teacher at Luis's school, announced tryouts for the school chorus. Luis was excited. He practiced very hard. And when it was his turn to sing in front of the teacher, everyone said he did a wonderful job.

Two days later the list of new chorus members was posted. Luis's name wasn't on it. When he went to ask why, Mr. Moore seemed nervous. Finally, the teacher told Luis that he could not join the chorus because of his disability.

"We have a lot of concerts where we have to move quickly on and off stage. And many times there is a long walk from the bus to the concert hall. I'm afraid it would be too difficult for you," Mr. Moore explained.

But this was not fair. Mr. Moore did not know what Luis was able to do. The teacher based his decision only on the fact that Luis had a disability.

Sometimes people are discriminated against because of their age. Some employers are prejudiced against hiring young people. Others will not consider older people for certain jobs. Discrimination because of age is illegal. But people still fight this kind of discrimination all the time, especially elderly people.

People with certain illnesses face many forms of discrimination also. Consider the story of Ryan White.

Ryan White died of AIDS in April of 1990. He was 18 years old. He had been infected with the AIDS virus when he received a blood transfusion as a young boy.

When Ryan first learned he had AIDS, he faced cruel discrimination in his hometown. Some of his classmates and their parents tried to keep him from attending school. Ryan was a victim of people's fear and lack of understanding about AIDS. Eventually, Ryan was welcomed at a school in a nearby town. But because of his experiences, Ryan White became an important spokesperson in the fight against AIDS discrimination.

Sometimes people are discriminated against because of their sexual choices. Homosexual men (gays) and homosexual women (lesbians) face this because they have partners of the same sex.

Homosexuals are thought of by many as "not normal" and "not acceptable." In recent years, gay men with AIDS in particular have faced some of the worst discrimination.

It is important to realize that discrimination in any form is hurtful and wrong. Discrimination can spread easily if it is ignored. It is only when people identify and understand the many kinds of discrimination in the world that they can become better able to fight it.



If you think you have been discriminated against, you can contact government agencies for help.

Chapter 8 Dealing with Discrimination

Even though progress was made during the civil rights movement, discrimination is still a serious problem in America. In fact, some people feel it is getting worse.

Discrimination is unjust. And more important, discrimination is dangerous.

Discrimination and Violence

In 1992, in a part of New York City called the Bronx, a young black boy and his younger sister were walking to school. Suddenly they were attacked by a group of white boys. These boys held the black children down and painted their faces with white shoe polish. They told the children, "Now you're white like us."

Fortunately, this boy and his sister were only frightened and not seriously hurt. But sometimes violence goes along with discrimination. In recent years, a number of people (blacks and whites) have been killed because of being in the "wrong neighborhood." In other words, they were killed only because of the color of their skin or their ethnic identity, not because of anything they did.

Discrimination is a serious problem in other countries, too. In 1989 and 1990, Communist governments fell in many countries in Europe. But when communism fell, many people began to form strong ties to their ethnic groups.

There have been many instances of discrimination of one ethnic group against another in these countries. In Germany, for example, angry young people known as "skinheads" have been discriminating against foreigners in their country. Much of this discrimination has been very violent.

Sometimes, the violence of discrimination can come from the *victims* of discrimination. People who have been discriminated against often feel frustration. This frustration can grow into anger as the discrimination continues. Finally, it can lead to violence.

That is what happened in Los Angeles, California, in the spring of 1992. African Americans and other minorities in Los Angeles felt that the police force there had discriminated against them for many years. In March of 1991, a group of white

police officers were accused of severely beating a black man named Rodney King. But at their trial, the jury pronounced these officers not guilty. The frustration and anger of African Americans as well as other minorities in Los Angeles exploded into violence. Fighting, burning, looting, and rioting went on for several days. There were incidents of violence in several other American cities as well.

Fighting Discrimination

There are things all of us can do to stop discrimination. Like Susan B. Anthony, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, we must not be afraid to fight discrimination.

In some schools, people are learning new forms of *conflict resolution*. Conflict resolution programs provide students and teachers with new ways to solve problems. They learn about tolerance and how to see another point of view. They try to find a common ground when they work with people and groups who are not getting along.

Some churches, synagogues, and community-based organizations are also exploring ways to deal with discrimination. There are also national organizations that have been set up to fight discrimination in the United States. Several of these groups are listed under "Where to Get Help" at the back of this book. In addition to those listed, groups like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are fighting discrimination throughout the world.

If you think you have faced discrimination, tell somebody. If you know someone who is being discriminated against, speak up for that person. Remember that most discrimination is illegal. If you or your family face discrimination, there are government agencies you may wish to contact. Keep talking about your feelings until you find help.

Remember the stories about Joe, Kate, and Luis. All three faced discrimination. But their stories did not end there.

Joe's mother wrote a letter to the local newspaper about the neighborhood where her family wanted to move. A man who was moving from the area saw her letter. He offered to sell his house to Joe's family.

Kate went to talk to the store manager again. She told him she thought he had been unfair. She showed him how strong she was by carrying several heavy boxes of groceries out of the store. He was impressed. The manager told her he needed a second delivery person. He offered her the job.

Two of Luis's friends told a favorite teacher what had happened with the chorus tryouts. She was very angry. She went to talk to Mr. Moore about it. Mr. Moore listened to her ideas, and the next week he said Luis could join the chorus.

You will be involved in many different situations, at home, in school, on the job, and in social settings. If you suspect that you are being treated unfairly, take a closer look. Ask yourself honestly

why things happened the way they did. What part did you play? How much did you try to help yourself? How did you compare to others who had the same goal as you? Was the outcome based on your attitude, ability, education, or experience? Or was it based only on your age, race, sex, or religion?

You can learn to recognize discrimination and take immediate action to fight it. Even one person can make a difference. You can make things better for yourself and for others. And each person who decides to fight discrimination becomes part of the *solution* instead of part of the problem.

Glossary

Explaining New Words

apartheid

A system of rules in South Africa that was designed to prevent the black majority from gaining control of society.

communism

A one-party form of government that works primarily for the good of the state rather than the individual.

conflict resolution

A system for dealing with tension between individuals or groups. Learning new ways to solve problems.

discrimination

Action taken based on prejudice.

ethnic identity

A person's image of himself or herself based on belonging to a particular group. The group shares a common history, customs, language, and religion.

ethnic jokes

Humorous remarks that make fun of people because of their ethnic identity.

individual rights

Rights that apply to each person regardless of race, religion, age, or sex.

majority

The largest group in society.

minority

One of many smaller groups in society.

physical disability

(handicap) A condition one is born with or that results from an illness or injury, making some activities more difficult. A disabled person may be blind, deaf, lame, or paralyzed.

prejudice

Hatred of a particular group, race, or religion that has no basis in fact.

segregation

Separation of people by races. In the United States, segregation is illegal.

sexual harassment

Any unwanted or inappropriate sexual attention, including touching, looks, comments, or gestures.

stereotype

A belief that all members of a certain group act in the same way or believe in the same things. Lack of regard for members of the group as individuals.

tolerance

Freedom from prejudice; willingness to listen and treat others with respect in spite of any differences.

Where To Get Help

Office of the General Counsel
United States Commission on Civil Rights
1121 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20425

Southern Law Poverty Center
Klanwatch Project
400 Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 548
Montgomery, AL 36195-5101

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith
Offices nationwide; check your phone book or
the phone book for the city nearest your town.

Urban League
Offices nationwide; check your phone book or
the phone book for the city nearest your town.

NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)
4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215

If you need legal help, contact your local Public Defender's Office, Legal Aid Society, Legal Assistance Association, or state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

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