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Civil Discourse Reflection

Lack of civility has increased over the past decade, though it has always been an issue in society. Not only is this a problem at Longwood, Farmville, and surrounding communities, but also nationwide. The United States and other countries are experiencing an extreme amount of incivility. To me, civility means the act of a person or people freely expressing themselves through talking or behaving in a polite or respectful manner, even if they do not agree with the opposing opinions of others.

Personally, I believe that civil discourse looks like an individual or group of people speaking out against an issue that will leave people wanting to make a change in the world. Although this way of communicating is promoted by much of society today, civil discourse often tends to be looked over when an issue arises. Confrontation is typically the result of a problem, which is normal in the day-to-day lives of humans. Though we cannot look to end these conflicts, we can make sure they are not hostile confrontations that end up turning into violence.

To the public, the lack of civility has only stirred up more problems than fixing the issue at hand. The social environment of these locations is suffering due to the problems they are facing, such as the disrespect of people towards other individuals. At the beginning of my senior year in high school, I realized I started to pay more attention to the news, because soon, I would be a registered voter and my voice could finally be heard. I became aware of the pressures that would be put on me and the rest of my generation to make a difference in the world, because we are the next leaders of the world. Since then, whether it is here at Longwood, on television, or reading online articles, I have noticed more and more cases of people blowing political or social debates out of proportion, causing the issue to snowball into something bigger than it already was.

In order to resolve the complication, there are multiple things that can be done. I think we, as a nation, need to work on controlling these situations by making sure individuals are restrained from the issue, understanding of others’ opinions, and can agree to compromising. Not everyone needs to be involved in a situation directly in order to make a difference. They need to understand and allow others to voice their thoughts, because everyone is equally entitled to have opinions. Along with these things, if the party arguing with an opposing party does not agree completely with each other, they need to find a way to come to a settlement. Often times, these issues at hand are not even a big deal, but people exaggerate the unnecessary, which leads to bigger problems that could have easily been controlled.

“Us versus them” is so ingrained in who we are, because this mentality is becoming more common. The human brain separates people into groups, whether it means to or not. We see on a daily occasion that people are divided based on religion, race, language, class, gender, age, and so on. This way of thinking has become a part of who we are in this day and time due to people experiencing issues first-hand or just watching stories brought up on local and national television programs. We have grown accustomed to “us versus them,” because we are shown only the negative views of the world. This causes a biased way of thinking, such as maybe one political party favors a group of people instead of another or people assume that one race of police officers target the opposite race. The youngest generation is now growing up in a world that almost promotes “us versus them” mentality.

With my roommate being a political science major, I have observed a multitude of situations where the conversation was less than civil. One situation in particular was when we had a disagreement over some political issue that was being talked about on the news. She felt strongly about the topic and I listened intently to her thoughts. I responded to her, even though my thoughts were different than hers. I did not get heated over the issue, because we both understood that everyone is entitled to their own opinions.

In order for there to be change, we need stronger citizen leadership in the United States. Being citizen leaders means citizens using their powers and rights to persuade other people to fight for resolutions. Nothing will change if no one speaks out about wanting to make a difference. These are the people who stand up for what they believe in no matter what, and they take pride in their thoughts and beliefs.

Throughout the years, lack of civility and civil discourse has become more of a world issue than we are used to. If more people chose to be less hostile towards others or even think before speaking, there would be less violence in the world. With all the hatred towards one another being built up, we are showing the younger generation that “us versus them” is acceptable. Everyone is allowed to have their own beliefs, but sometimes, people need to realize that other people’s opinions matter besides just their own.