

### Judgements in Society

Society and people are ever changing, but the one thing that remains constant is many people's resistance to change and continuation of following societal norms. Through my years at Mentor High, and the Mentor Schools District in general, I have realized that the students within our buildings' walls continue to focus on things about others that have little impact on who they truly are as an individual. Often, I have observed that this is simply looking at someone and judging them based on surface level aspects of a person, such as, their clothes, skin color, looks or even something as simple as the way they are standing. Although this does not always lead to bullying throughout school, what it does lead to is something far more dangerous. This is dissociation, ignorance and misconceptions. Many people would ask how dissociation, ignorance and misconception could possibly be worse than bullying, but to me the answer lies within the action itself. This is because bullying implies interaction, exchanges between two or more people which could result in understanding between the individuals if a common ground is found between them. However, what dissociation does not allow for is common ground to be found, as others are cast out from the lives of many simply because of a judgement made about them in a brief second, using only partial information. Because of this, I feel as though the issue of judgements based solely on bias or inaccurate information needs to be addressed in society.

At an initial glance, the idea of judgements based on bias seem to be simple, something that people do in all walks of life just because it is easier to do than truly getting to know an individual for who they are. Despite this surface level and superficial take on the issue, the root is far deeper in society than many people would think. This is because people often make these judgements self-consciously and are completely unaware of the fact that they are being made in their minds. Because of this, it becomes increasingly difficult to remove from society and the school community, but because of the effects that accompany them, these actions still must be taken.

One of the major reasons why making judgments on others needs to be addressed is due to the fact that I have witnessed them to cause individualism to be lost. This is largely derived from the fact that people tend to not be themselves out of fear of being judged just because they are different. As a result, it leads to a less diversified community, when a culturally diverse community is exactly what we should be striving to achieve. When expression is lost all sense of identity and independence is lost. Without true individualism in the school community, all innovation is at risk of being lost, as there will be no one willing to go against the grain and challenge the things they do not agree with that are going on in either the school or the community.

Not only is making judgements based upon bias something that needs to be changed due to individualism being lost, but also because people are willing to spend so much time understanding other things. This is because people will spend hours solving puzzles, playing games or trying to connect and empathize with characters on TV shows or movies. Society often takes so much time towards things like this to get the full story and completely visualize where others were able to derive these items from, but in every school settings and the community in general this is not done for real before.

Something that will be able to express people's thoughts and ideas while still listening to the ideas of others. Something is needed that will allow people to truly express the selves and not be scared of facing judgment from peers or individuals in society. To me, this solution looks a whole lot like art. This is because art is often able to bridge barriers we often put up between us while still allowing for us to express our ideas and emotions through the art itself. Although this is not the only solution, to me, creating art will benefit all individuals and society as a whole.

With more art and murals, society would become expressive once again. This is often the major issue facing our school community because people tend to follow the trends of everyone else just out of the fear and possibility of being judged. Because of this, I have witnessed diversity in my very own school to be lost, every person looking the same at the next. With this, Mentor High and the Mentor community would no longer be susceptible to being lost in the crowd, but it will begin to stand out and show what we as community and as individuals stand for. The upcoming generations would no longer have to worry about fitting in or trying to be "cool," but they could begin to be more of themselves because the art will allow their ideas to be heard with their appearance being pushed to the side, which is exactly what is needed in today's society.

The judgements people face on a daily basis continue to show to be the crippling aspect of the Mentor Schools District that I have been a part of my whole life. The issue larger than is; however, is that I know these judgements based on appearance and bias are not just present in Mentor, but present in everyplace around the world. Because of this, it makes it that much more important that something is done to stop the growing issues that accompany these judgements. There is no longer time to wait and let the next generation deal with the issue we have at hand, but our schools and cities need to take initiative in order to be a catalyst for change. Implementing murals throughout these cities and schools would show to have lasting effects on society and individuals. This is because people would begin to express themselves and hear the thoughts of others in regard to art, as art is often shown to bridge barriers due to the connections people are able to make amongst them. It is most important in society to continue to build people up, rather than tearing them down, and making judgements on other people does not help build others to their full potential. Dissociating with an individual before getting to truly know them and what they stand for is not a way in which our society will be able to prosper with innovation like it needs to. Our thoughts and ideas are all as important as the next, and sometimes it just takes one person to have the courage in order to make a difference and speak their mind in order to change the world. However, these individuals will not be able to make the difference if they are scared of being judged for having opinions different than everyone else's. Because of this, action needs to be taken in order to eliminate the judgements people make on others, as no individual should ever have to hide who they truly are out of fear what others will think, and no child should have to worry about being alone or bullied for a misunderstanding or misconception.

Even though people and cultures are what drive society and continue to make it prosper. Instead of people spending so much time to empathize and sympathize with TV characters, we should do this with the people we come in contact with in everyday life. Instead of trying to solve puzzles, we should work to understand each other, as these are the things that will truly make an impact down the road. Because of these large differences in interpretation of events and people, to me it becomes increasingly clear that something must be done in regard to the judgement issues in order to improve relationship in society.

What I have seen in my own life and in the lives of people around me is that judgements also lead to misconception. This misconception creates unfactual stories or rumors to be told simply because people do not take the time to get to know people, as they see the appearance and make judgements based on it, even though appearance is only a small aspect of who someone is and it is largely the most deceiving or difficult to important thing about an individual. However, people still use it in order to make their judgements on individuals which does not allow room for the actual thoughts of people or the ideas they could have, as they are automatically counted out just because of the way they may look or the way they might be presenting themselves.

Although people are constantly told to "not judge a book by its cover," I have seen firsthand that people often mock this phrase. In the school environment I have seen people using this phrase as a joke and is often not taken seriously, as students no longer feel as though it applies to them. However, this is the exact issue that we are faced with: people's inability or unwillingness to change. Due to this, society is continued to be put at risk and threatened by the increasing prevalence of the issue, as there are no clear actions willing to be taken as people feel as if it is just human nature or something that cannot be changed since so many people make these judgements. However, what is important to understand is that if something is not truly done with this issue now then future generations will have to face this issue with increased intensity due to the continuing increase of social media in everyday life. Because of these effects that are able to come with these judgements based on bias against others or on appearance, I feel as though actions must be taken in order to assure that the children of future generations do not have their voices stripped from them, opportunities taken away or do not lose the ability to telling their own truth or story out of fear of judgement. No child deserves to have to worry about how they are going to be judged or how their actions may be perceived by others, as self-expression is so important during years of child development in order for individuals to determine who they truly are and what they want to be the future, but this is halted and often undermined by the fear of judgement from one's peers, which is why actions must be taken in order to alleviate or remove these issues so commonly found in society.

To remove these judgements so common throughout Mentor, to me, an indirect approach needs to be taken. I feel as though an indirect approach is in need due to the fact that people so often judge other subconsciously and completely unaware that they are doing so. Because of this, I feel as though the only solution is something that will be able to bring people together in a way that individuals haven't been brought together.