



tolerance in our own words

essays

on

tolerance

compiled

by

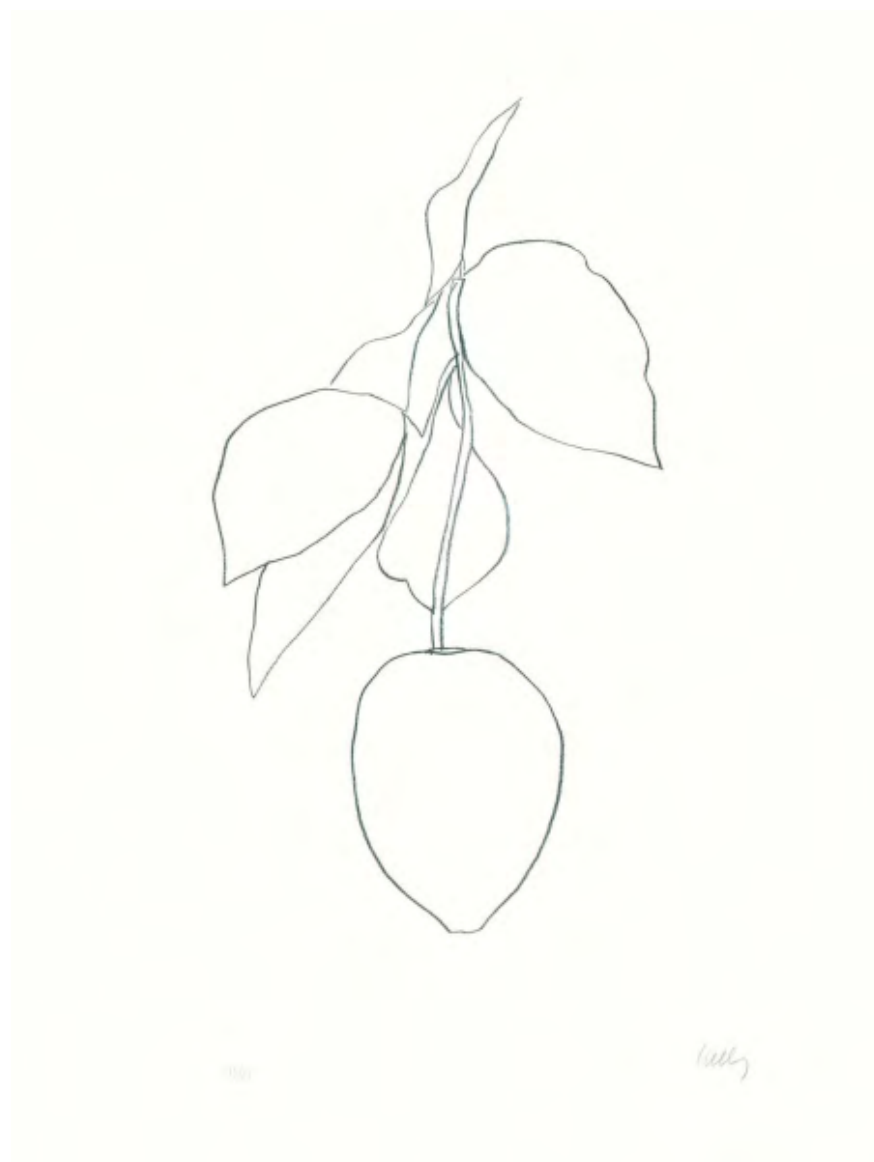


JUNIOR & SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF
KOGAKUIN UNIVERSITY

Tolerance in Our Own Words

a writing project

A compilation of
essays on tolerance
by students from
India, Argentina, Peru
& Japan



Initiated, edited and compiled by:
The Service Team of the
Senior High School of Kogakuin University, Japan.



this story takes place during a state
of emergency and a public calamity.
it's an unfinished book because it's
still waiting for an answer. an answer
I hope someone in the world can
give me. you? it's a story in technicolor
to add a little luxury which, by God,
I need too. amen for all of us.

Clarice Lispector,
1977

August 2022

Foreword

I would like to express a word of sincere thank you to all those who shared their views of tolerance in their own words. In a world where people are almost impelled by the pre-established ways of thinking that society creates for them to constantly hate, to be violent or to forcefully defend oneself, it is you as an individual who can step back to examine your thoughts and actions before committing them. With this project we realize that writing is one way to reawaken ourselves to this ability. That we are going to tell a story with our own hands, not to create a universal law of tolerance that could settle all the problems we have, but to reassess our own lives to reconsider what must be tolerated, and also, what cannot be. Writing that tries to give shape to our own murmuring conflicts within us so that it emerges out on paper by itself, for us to affirm: “Yes, this is what I have lived.” To be a little bit more wiser in our actions and the words we speak—both to strangers and to people whom we see every day. Wiser—that we live in this moment together—so why not be happy, why not show kindness and gratitude and share joy. Why do we instead fight and vehemently defend our own “justice”—all for the sake of the supposed “happiness” that comes as the result of fighting. Why postpone happiness?

As I read through your writings, a thought sprang to my mind: that tolerance is the eye of joy that we constantly look at the world with. When we come across someone with values that we disagree with, we give them joy. And when your line of willpower breaks and you cannot see for what good cause you are tolerating them for, then we give them a sad smile and leave silently—to move on to seek others who are needing our joy. Who would readily embrace the joy that we bring to them with their own small but proud hands. Joy cannot be bought with insolence, or being scornful. Be silent, be silent in carrying your joy, and it would certainly spread.

Speak only of joy.

Last but not least, be a little bit more considerate with your words. Words can easily become daggers that wound a person deep, deep and buried and solitary. Words define who we are; it is our "voice."

With much love, do spread this beauty. Your beauty.

Sincerely,

The Service Team of Senior High School of Kogakuin University,
Tokyo, Japan.



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The service project of Japan
MS. Chiho and Mrs. Jessica Pattnaik

Tolerance

By Sai Partha Sarathi



Meaning

Tolerance means letting others(who don't necessarily share your views) embrace themselves without any toxic interference.

Experience

A year ago, I was the President of Spectrum Club i.e. Science and Tech club at my school. During the science fair, the club was unsure about whether should build our

own project or not, because we were hosting the fair and it won't be fair if we also participated in it.

I never think of ethics and morality as I believe, science should be embraced in every way, it's on the person concerned who decides the nature as good or evil. I pushed the idea to have our own project and compete, I got permission from the Headmaster as well as from faculty representatives. After that, we all put in the hard work to make the layout a working reality, still unsure about whether to compete, even though the club was divided into 2, we all dedicated ourselves to science and got done with the project before the timeline. Seeing the dedication of the critics of my idea to compete, I took a step back and had a conversation with the Club secretary who was leading them. We then resolved to the idea that we will put our project on Display rather than competing and we will dedicate this to all the unsung heroes of science e.g. LISE MEITNER, CHIEN-SHIUNG WU, MARY GOLDA ROSS, BENJAMIN BANNEKER, CAROLINE HERSCHEL, etc. This event was clearly for me, being tolerant of opposite viewpoints here, whether to compete or not, still gave each other our own space and worked towards the common goal i.e. making a project.

Tolerance

by Akrisht Singh Sunbeam School Lahartara

Tolerance is an important concept that helps people to live together peacefully. To be tolerant means that you accept other people's opinions and preferences, even then they live in a way that you don't agree with. It can also be defined as a fair attitude towards those whose lifestyle differs from ours. It is a noble virtue. It enables us to judge the other sides of things with patience without losing temper. Tolerance doesn't just make peaceful coexistence possible. It helps us in being open to other ways of thinking which can help in personal development. Teaching children about tolerance is very important. Children shouldn't grow up with the feelings of hatred or suspicion. Children who grow up with hate turn into unhappy people. Children who are forced to believe certain opinions develop into people who aren't free or not independent thinkers. If children experience love and tolerance they will be able to grow up and lead a happy and peaceful life. Hence, we should learn the importance of tolerance.

Tolerance in our own minds

by Ananya Kashyap Sunbeam School Lahartara

Well, the word “Tolerance” is very deep and diverse. Almost every second person has their own definition for tolerance. Dictionary defines it as “the capacity to endure pain or hardship.”

If I am a foodie to define tolerance then he/she may say that tolerance is when they want to have cake and the bakery is shut.

But...for me?

According to me tolerance is a combo of patience and acceptance without these tolerance is incomplete. For me tolerance is also accepting the difference in everyone but not as a flaw rather as a fact that it makes them unique.

This is tolerance in my words but I also want to acknowledge the incident which helped me transform the bookish definition into one of my own.

Actually I was a single child for quite a lot of time. So when my brother was born, I was not ready to share my parents or any of my stuff with him. Slow and gradually I also adopted scared that he will damage it.

Tolerance, according to me is very important between friends as well. Friends should be tolerant to hear each other, understand their problems and take stand for each other.

Life is beautiful when we are tolerant because it helps you to accept everything, even the challenges that make life fun.

Tolerance

by Ayan Mehrotra Sunbeam School Lahartara

Tolerance. The Cambridge dictionary describes this particular word as "the ability to deal with something unpleasant or annoying, or to continue existing despite bad or difficult conditions. Though true, I would like to word this definition a bit differently. My reason? I'll be explaining through the art of storytelling.

A few months ago, I was in my room studying while my brother was doing the same. Everything seemed fine until out of nowhere, music started playing. I turned to him and asked, are you listening to music? He replied with a yes. I asked him to turn the music down because i need to study, but he said he couldn't concentrate without music. I was backed into a corner. He had his boards upcoming so I was trying to make him as comfortable as i could to relieve any amount of pressure I could. I had to then soldier on each of our same time studying sessions. Surprisingly by the time his boards were over, I possibly started actually liking studying with music. I tolerated his habit to make him comfortable. I believe the definition of tolerance is just one word, compromising. Whenever we Tolerate someone or something, we compromise. That's why I believe that the definition of Tolerance in my own words would be compromise.

Tolerance

by Kanyaka Singh Sunbeam School Lahartara

Tolerance is a very important part of a person's life, it tells us about the person's personality, and how much a person can be patient, not only being patient but accepting the challenges or differences that are part of life. As a student, school is a place where I study with students who are very different from me, but accepting their existence shows how friendly and tolerant I am when I have to agree with the opinion or behaviour of a person when I am in a team. Knowing that everyone struggles with different problem I try to give much of respect to them. Accepting people as they are, is something a person needs to have for a peaceful and joyful life. At last I would like to say, we all are different but Equally!

Tolerance

by Lavanya Singh Sunbeam School Lahartara

Travelling experiences bring enthusiasm and help us to learn different values. Here, I am going to share an event which taught me the value of tolerance.

Me and my family were on a trip to Shimla and we were travelling on a train. In our compartment there were two other families sitting in front of each other. The family members were talking in their native language. I think it was Tamil/Telugu and they were laughing in between.

Suddenly, one of the other passengers who was sitting in front of this family started yelling at them saying that they were making fun of him and are laughing at him and his wife. The South Indian family was not comfortable in Hindi and that is why they were not able to clarify. Ultimately, both the families started fighting with each other which ended up in a physical fight. Some of the passenger then called RPF officers travelling on the train and they took away there people fighting, with them. My father told me that later a legal case has been filed against them.

We live in India, a country known for its 'unity in diversity'. We have different languages, religions and culture. We must give due respect to everyone. That family could have easily avoided that legal case and all the pain/discomfort if they were tolerant enough.

Though this experience I have learnt the value of tolerance. For me tolerance is a quality of allowing other people to do what they like even if you don't agree/approve of it.

Tolerance in our words

by Praseon Mishra Sunbeam School Lahartara

Tolerance is the willingness to accept opinions and behaviours one dislikes or disagrees with. All of us tolerance certain things to a certain extent beyond which the barriers of tolerance are broken and in many such instances we take wrong actions with worse consequences. Tolerance a lot of times is respecting a person but not their actions, tolerance can also be not getting angry for someone's mistake even if it causes a damage small or big. What seems a person's strongest attribute; to stay calm and not lose temper even against wrong, is also the weakest link in a human being's character, people often test the tolerance of others expecting them to shake it off every time. An anecdote which I recall and would like share that around three years ago I met someone whom I considered a friend, he had a personality of being this "cool" kid in class and always try to do this so called pranks which were not even close to harmless jokes to makes others laugh, they were always humiliating. Just like the others I didn't care much because it wasn't on me until it actually was on me; his yet another "prank" made me get punished by the teacher for no reason at all! Since then we just got distant apart and I also made real good friends who are always by my side and realty care.

In my opinion tolerance is like a dam if broken the massive flow of water destroys everything in the way. That is tolerance in my words.

Tolerance in my own words

by Rupam Singh Sunbeam School Lahartara

Some say, “The highest result of education is tolerance.”
Some say “Tolerance is the only real test of civilization.”
Some say, “The heart of wisdom is tolerance.” But the fact that the topic here reads, “Tolerance in my own words urges me to develop my own narrative as I write this essay. My definition will be unrealistic at time, it can be wrong, it can be flawed but for sure will I develop a definition of tolerance in my life, which will describe who and what I am. Being a survives and sufferer of a sexual assault at the age of 7, I wonder what tolerance means in my life, if it does mean something, anything or probably nothing. Is it tolerance, which stops me from revealing this to my parents, or is it just my fear? Is it tolerance, that the creepy man stands right in front of me, and all I can do is nothing, or, is it just the sphere of helplessness that I made around myself? Is it tolerance? I wonder. I don’t sit with my legs crossed at the corner-most seat of patriarchy. I don’t smile and wave and stay silent when a “her” wistles at me like a bait. My pillow is weakling; it doesn’t complete its stories. I don’t call myself alone. I am not alone. But I think the fact that I am not alone makes me more prone into situations wherein like today, I keep wondering of a so-called moral virtue as nothing but an immortal vile. I know I am wrong. I know my questions are wrong. I know my sentences do not make sense here when I have to write all hunky-dory things is what I have gone through. How do I describe to you the pain I felt when unwanted fingers touched me in places I covered my entire life. No words can do justice to the suffocation I felt. Was it tolerance? Is it tolerance?

Draupadi, the women who tolerated everything for the sake of her husbands' pride. The fact that I am writing of women like her today makes me swallow the hard truth that we are not alone. And indeed, it is a sad state of affairs. Krishna had blue skin. Does that give you and me strength in any way? of course the blueness of his skin and mine has differences. Vast differences. His natural mine is forced. When you (Draupadi) look at the marks, the imprint of his hand on your wrist, I see a part of you fade away into the dust. How he dragged Draupadi, across the room, like he owned her, from one corner of the room to another in silence with only her scream and his yell or rather a violent cry for dominance echoing through the vacuum. Do you call this tolerance? Is this the tolerance I am talking about? Is my view of tolerance flawed? What if I have been asking the wrong questions all along? What if real questions are the ones that are followed by a full stop?

With so many different questions in my mind, I went to the most trusted person of mine. My grandmother, whatever she sold me is extremely telling today when I write about tolerance. She said, "The tolerance of any person is like a stretched thread, if it is stretched beyond a limit, it is bound to break whatever you tolerated shows your willpower to stand in a storm. But you however forgot to bound or create a line of control for your tolerance. You tolerate for the good, but if there is no good, what are you tolerating for?" And hence, this brings me to this conclusion that, one may tolerate the world of demons for the sake of an angel but it is equally important for you to know who that angel is and for what cause you are tolerating it for. Tolerance is ensuring others have equal rights to live their life, their way and the pursuit of happiness even if you don't agree with their decisions or choices.

Tolerance

by Sikhi Kumari Sunbeam School Lahartara

In my life tolerance is something which gives me an inner peace and a mental strength. It is something which in this generation everyone lost. Tolerance is that if you accept other people's opinions and preferences, even when they live in a way that you don't agree with. From my life sometime I also got broke my tolerance and start arguing and after that I have repentance of my behaviour. Then that time my mother explained me importance of tolerance from that time I have impressed me. So please think before arguing, and try the peace of tolerance. These are some tips to practice tolerance.

- Be sensitive to the language.
- Acceptance
- Change your perspective (if need)
- Understand others

Tolerance

by Sushmita Sunbeam School Lahartara

Tolerance can be defined as a fair and aim attitude towards those whose lifestyle differ from ours. It is a noble virtue, it is wanted everywhere. It is the virtue that helps us put p with those who have different ways and opinions, and outlooks in life. It also enables us to judge the other sides of things with patience, without losing temper. In the past, the difference between in religion let to prosecution, the differences in opinions ended in blows. Tolerance is a virtue much needed in our turbulent world. A tolerant person does not tolerate political and financial dishonesty. But in our personal life and daily dealings, we shall have to belong bearing. Tolerance in the negative sense simply means the ability to tolerate opponents. It leads to less stress and greater happiness in the overall community. Many people interpret the means of tolerance as a weakness; we will say it's their ful. Many tend to react to brick with brick. Indian women in particular are a unique example of tolerance. These women do not let their families suffer and let them live a happy life.

We, as ordinary mortals should that everyone has equal rights but unfortunately, we often forget about this and as a result we make wrong actions and decisions. Most of the things depend on the society we live in, This society helps us to become human, and if we have an ambition to be different from the prehistoric person, then we have to act like a human. Our generations can teach next generation, that everyone is equal and let say to 'No' to Homophobia. At the end what I really can tell is that the peace begins with tolerance. I definitely agree with Hellen Keller's opinion that "the highest result of education is tolerance."

Tolerance

Tolerance “the ability or willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behavior that one dislikes or disagrees with”. I’m honestly not a great fan of the word tolerate, as it’s in some way doing less than the bare minimum, and apart from that it seems like we should be grateful for the people that tolerate. You are “willing” to “tolerate” something you openly dislike. I cannot be the only one that thinks that sounds absolutely horrible, right? It’s an excuse, an excuse to bad behavior to be xenophobic, racist, homophobic or sexist. These are topics you should not have to “tolerate” and be rewarded for it, you should just accept that not everyone is a white cis straightmale, and move on with your life, because it is none of your business what someone is wearing, who they love or their gender.

I want to first say that I’m grateful for the opportunity that I was given, to speak about this topic that is never given the spotlight it deserves. I want to thank the students of Round Square Service Project members of Junior & Senior High School of Kogakuin University for bringing this topic to the light in my school. I would like to use this space to speak about my own experience with the word tolerate, my experience within my friends, family, and even with myself. There are two sides for the word tolerate, being the one that has to tolerate something that is wrong, or being tolerated when you should just be accepted. In this essay, I’m going to mostly speak about tolerating things that are wrong, but in the future I would love to write or speak to someone about the latter.



As a woman I have been told a thousand times by my own family to “tolerate” my grandparents sexist comments, why should I? it’s wrong, we all know it, why keep quiet? I believe that there is the misconception, that since old people were born in another time they should have some kind of free pass towards this kind of behavior, when they should not. Sexism is not good now, and neither it was in the 50’s, just because it was accepted doesn’t make it right. If my grandparents could learn how to use a TV they can also learn about feminism. This “tolerance” that we are speaking about is just a way to let people get away with things, is a way of keeping people quite, a way of slowing our way towards a safe world for everyone.

“just tolerate it” “don’t give it a thought” “ignore it” “it’s better if you keep quiet”, this are some of the things that I have been told by my own family, and the worst thing? I accepted it, I thought they were right, that I should let the get away with it, that I should keep my frustration within myself, I feel bad for that little girl, who thought being quite was the way to go. And I’m proud of myself for overcoming it. But soon I learned that its east to go against your family than going against your friends. I clearly remember the day one of my guy friends said “a woman can’t play the guitar” I was incredibly mad, could I play a guitar? Absolute no, was it because I was a woman? No. I couldn’t even open my mouth and I already had one of my friends looking at me and shaking her head, I kept quiet, but as you can see, I still haven’t gotten over it, because I couldn’t, how could I? It was wrong and I still blame myself for not holding him accountable.

All because I didn’t want to go against my friend. I was so disappointed in myself after arriving at my house, how was it that just two weeks ago I was calling out every one of my uncles for their sexist comments but I wasn’t even able to utter a word when it came to a friend.

I have say to myself a thousand time to just “tolerate it” to keep my head down, to bite my tongue because it “wasn’t my place” because “everyone is entitled to an opinion” of course everyone is, but that’s not an opinion, that’s just being sexist, you didn’t shared your opinion, you made a xenophobic comment. There is a big difference between having an opinion and discrimination.

Nowdays I can’t seem to keep my mouth shut, talking like I’m taller than trees, because I decided that no one should feel like I did all those years ago, I promised myself that my little sisters would always see me speak up, so they would feel like they also could. Because that day when speaking with my grandparents, we were not discussing about ice cream flavors, we were discussing about my rights as a woman.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Renata Santillan

Godspell College, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

TOLERANCE

Dear friends from all around the globe,

As students from Godspell College in Buenos Aires, Argentina, we are delighted to share our brief but concise take on the topic.

According to the dictionary, tolerance is "a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward opinions and practices that differ from one's own." An ability we must all develop in order to create a better world.

We personally think of tolerance as a very important value because it encompasses other values as well. Being tolerant means being respectful towards every aspect and difference of any other human being. It is accepting and respecting all religions, the different cultures, opinions, and ways of being.

To some people it is difficult to coexist with such diversity, we need to receive and accept it with kindness and an open mind. There is not a moment in time where everyone is the same. There is diversity everywhere, even in small aspects of life such as opinions or traditions.

Tolerance is the base of every relationship and community, local or global. Without it we are doomed to a life with no opportunities, peace or love.

We are grateful for the space to share our message. We hope it encourages you to work on your tolerance, which we must all do.

Best wishes,

Ema Langer and Agostina Mila.





Tolerance

Tolerance is to be patient. It is to be patient even in the hardest situations of our lives.

Everytime someone says something we hear all the time, we're being tolerant. I don't honestly believe it is something wrong, because in many situations being tolerant

saves us

from doing or reacting to certain situations or comments in an early time, before even thinking about it. I think tolerance relates a lot with keeping ourselves calm in every situation.

By this, I believe that tolerance is life. Because as humans we are in a constant situation in which we are or believe we have to be patient, tolerant.

However, I also believe that tolerance should be used in only certain situations. Because although they are everyday situations, we, as a society, should not let ourselves down in any

way. So if someone is refering to us in a racist way, for example, we should raise our voices

and take action towards it, not only for us but for creating a world in which all people are conscious of what racism creates and by this, transforming our society into one that represents equality for everyone.



ooo



Tolerance:

Hi friends, my name is Emma Temes, I am a student of Godspell college school and I whanted to share with you my meanings of tolerance:

I think tolerance is something we work every day. Life presents us different situations in which we must be tolerant in order to achieve our goals or simply to cope with certain circumstances that occur.

Since I was a little girl, I was always told to wait for everything to come, as I was also taught to be tolerant. Many times, life showed me that tolerance is the key to cope with many situations, for example our school make us several times work in groups for different topics, having different ideas between the group members, therefore we have to be tolerant, debate about the ideas and reach to a final agreement so as to conclude the final project.

I also apply tolerance in situations in which I think I should run out of the situation, for example, if I get a bad answer, I prefer to be tolerant and go on with my day, since it would be a great waste of energy to get involved, and I would be tolerant with another person when accepting that he/she may have a bad day.

I learned the meaning of the word tolerance over the years, because if I was not tolerant, I could not achieve many of my goals, such as running for half an hour, to achieve this I had to start slowly to be able to run a little more each day, and if tolerance was not present in me, my ultimate goal of running 30 minutes in a row would not have been fulfilled.

Tolerate, is the ability to accept the existence of different opinions or behaviors that one dislike or disagree, these is one of the most important issues by learning in tolerating each other's.

To conclude, I could say that I have demonstrated through my examples the importance of tolerance in my life, since I believe that being tolerant is something very valuable to achieve your own goals and live in harmony with others. Anyone who learns to be tolerant, gets many benefits by learning to tolerate and look at life situations in a different way by thinking with more wisdom, obviously while tolerating situations that do not harm us and affect ourself.

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TOLERANCE

I was born in Venezuela so, when I came to Peru I developed tolerance because I found people who had a different culture from me.

I learned about tolerance when I found out that there were other people different from me, people of a different race, ethnicity, sexuality, education, ideas, etc.

As much as I could disagree or agree with other people's ideas I would have to tolerate them because everyone deserves respect.

Tolerance puzzles

by Mikaela S. St. George's College

On the midst of a seasonal change-
It's February 28th-
I arrive to my dad's home

The first words we exchange
Are about pain
But God, I am so happy to be
Where the air is cool.

It is a debate-
Opposition argues that my mom is insane-
I stand firm on tolerance
And bear that he, in spite of me,
has raw thoughts in his mouth.

Tolerance, my friends say,
Is about enduring and allowing-
But how long can one aby
When dignity is at stake?

To what extent does accepting mean promoting-
For I accepted -heated and defeated-
A reality we're I am insulted

The months pass like a dream,
and slowly my memory
detaches from reality-

I understand that the crude comments
became a burden to tolerate.

Eventually, I learned.
Tolerance is not about acting deaf-
the force of sound is too loud-
rather it is:

About acknowledging the diversity of the melodies-
despite not resembling our own-
despite not resonating with our bodies.

I returned to Peru renewed-
and I shared what I discovered:

Intelligence and kindness intertwined
deliver a message of strength only to the worthy few-
who understand that cruelty is not a virtue...

That is tolerance.

Tolerance in my words

by Pierina C. St. George's College

Having to raise a voice as a teenager is often something hard. You are not considered adult enough to be talking about serious topics, but you are also not a child, and the desire to have your opinion listened to is always there. I often find myself as a listener for that reason, and the things that I witness at family lunches or on the streets, leads me to think tolerance is not found everywhere.

People are different, people have different views and different experiences about every single thing in the world; but we don't seem to realize that. For me, respect is the base of tolerance, the base of a good society. Normally, we are used to doing a single thing always the same way, because we find ourselves feeling safe, and when the moment comes for someone to show us a whole new world of meaningful and unique differences, we tend to close our eyes and not listen.

I often hear the phrase "I can tolerate it, but I don't accept it" or "I tolerate it, but outside of my house" as if tolerance was something that is linked to a burden, to something that you wished wasn't actually there. I want to believe that at some point, tolerance will become an actual synonym of respect, not only in the dictionary but in real life, because for me it is.

Listening to everyone and having respect for their opinions, a way of expressing themselves and learning from them, may help people to realize that there is more of a meaning to tolerance than just pretending to accept something. For me, tolerance is the key to a better change in society. Perhaps with more tolerance, teenagers will start to raise their voices and stop being listeners.

Tolerance

by Adriano S. St. George's College

We know that by being tolerant we show respect for the ideas or beliefs of others since these may be different and not coincide with ours. Therefore, by being tolerant and respectful, we show ourselves as people with an open mind, capable of solving any problem. Through this essay, I can demonstrate how I put my tolerance into practice.

In November of last year when the school decided that it would open its doors to returning to face-to-face classes, I was excited because I would finally see my friends and return to my classes after almost two years. Still, this return would be done with prior authorization from the parents and my parents said no, that it was not yet time to return to school. I remember that I sat down with them and we had a conversation where I explained my desire to return and they gave me their reasons for their refusal. There I put my tolerance into practice because I respected my parents' decision even though it was different from mine and I understood that they did it for my own good. That is why I finished the school year virtually.

Today, tolerance has helped me to be more empathetic, understand why people act or think differently and know how to listen, so I can have a better relationship with my family and friends. I believe that if we are tolerant, our world will be better.

Play (in) (of) Tolerance

by Shirley Ono Senior High School of Kogakuin University

The subject of tolerance is, in most cases, directed towards an external other—an other person, an other culture, or an other country. But isn't there a much more immediate and close presence that we are always neglecting to tolerate—our own selves?

I am a returnee—I spent the first half of my elementary school in New York City—but the “intolerance” I experienced was not in the foreign country, but rather back in my own country, Japan. I had almost no difficulty blending in to my new surroundings when I went to New York and immediately after I returned to Japan—probably because of my young age, which allowed me to soak up anything that I was surrounded by like an innocent sponge. It was only when I entered middle school when I began to question what my identity really was. I loved New York and my experience living there had given me so much: my love for books, for music, and the tool called English which allowed me to access the world outside Japan. But I had, after all, only spent a small portion of my life in New York, and the place was increasingly getting foreign to me as my years in Japan progressed.

It was thus when I was struggling to make sense of this cultural duality that I began to realize the presence of a certain pressure that was being exerted by my peers. And not just by my peers—I began to realize that the entire Japanese society was setting a certain expectation on me based on the word “returnee” that I was labelled with. The terrifying aspect was that I was never aware of this presence of “intolerance,” and neither were other returnees recognizing this form of cultural oppression. Moreover, this was never something that

was brought up to the surface to be discussed seriously. The game went like this: if you're a "just-returned" returnee who is completely foreign to Japan, then you're in, for you qualify the peers' and the society's expectations of an idealized figure of a returnee. If you don't meet their criteria—or worse, if you lost them in the course of years you spent after returning—you quit saying that you're a returnee, hide that identity and blend in with the Japanese mass. The last thing you want to be is something of an in-between: neither fully a returnee nor fully a Japanese, always wavering between the two, unestablished, undetermined, unstable.

It is impossible to fully get rid of these small peer pressures exerted on the unestablished by the established mass. Japan is an extremely monocultural country that values order, unity and discipline—hence, it demands that each individual be placed to belong in an established category, such as "returnee" that it specifically sets its certain expectations for. But one can never simply do away with a culture by labelling it dualistically as either "good" or "bad." Hence, within a culture, there is always going to exist certain "intolerances" for some. The question is not how to get rid of these intolerances, but rather to think how and when we are able to tolerate the very intolerances. Tolerance and intolerance are not binary opposites, as the word may indicate. The function that intolerance has is to negate and to reject, while tolerance is to affirm, to accept. Hence, one could think of the function of tolerance as a type of affirmation that opens up space for its own capacity of accepting, to which it may include certain forms of intolerance itself.

The subject of tolerance always begins with the I. I tolerate you, I accept you. This is because the affirmative spatialization is always something voluntary. If you see yourself caught in a net of intolerances, it is only you who can start the chain of tolerance. You cannot force another to tolerate yourself first, or promise that you would tolerate the other once the other has first tolerated you. Tolerance communicates itself in its gradual diffusion, not in mutual exchange. Hence, it is always your own self who must find way to open up the space for the other and their intolerance, to be the first to say, "I accept." How does one manage this?

Instead of choosing sides on whether to force myself to abide by their expectations of a returnee or to completely blend in with the Japanese majority, I chose to be multiple, to be plural. This also meant: to be undecided, to be deferring an absolute unity of identity. By living with such a mindset within me, I was tolerating myself, opening a space for the plurality of my identity. Likewise, tolerance for the other always presupposes a tolerance for the self. Dispute occurs and intensifies when one feels a violent necessity to defend oneself with a justification of one's righteousness. Because one has not "come to terms" with one's very own self, one demands to justify it through effacing the possibility of the other. It is this insistence of justice towards oneself without patience, without the spatialization for small alterations or variations to your own identity, I believe, that makes continue and deteriorates dispute with the other. To change this chain of intolerance, one must start with accepting one's own self—as a collection of multiple identities, multiple backgrounds, and multiple views that are themselves subject to change. I dream of the thrilling arts in New York but I feel a sense of origin, an "at-homeness" in Japan. And not just. I love music but I love the logic of language; I love philosophy but I'm a woman; I'm a feminist but I'm not a social activist; I love Clarice Lispector's novels but I don't write novels...Who am I? One minute to another, racing back and forth between my different loves and obsessions, changing in an instant, then back again. But that's precisely what I am: undecided, multiple.

When you, too, become aware of this "multiplicity" that you already have long carried within you—you, too, will see that the connection, the agreement, and hence the tolerance of/with the other is made possible by sharing one part of your identity with them. But for there to be "parts," as plural, you have to have both the parts that you share with the other and parts that you differ from the other. And this "other," too, is made up of different parts that they in turn share/differ with your parts. The concept that our identities are made up of multiple parts takes us away from the notion that we each are something complete and absolute in ourselves that we have to guard against the absolutely stabilized other. Instead, our interactions with the other are a play between our parts that share and differ—an ongoing play,

like busy atoms bonding and breaking up, never ceasing their small vibrations of joy. Our tolerance for the other happens right in this movement, this change. We can come to view tolerance as a play between those parts that we share and differ with the other, of opening up and at times closing in, the play between tolerance and intolerance themselves—the play of certain forms of intolerance within the spacing of tolerance itself. This does not mean that we should forcibly squeeze in every form of intolerance within our spacing of tolerance. The constant change in this play presupposes neither complete and unconditional states of pure tolerance (agreement with every part) nor pure intolerance (disagreement with every part). Rather, it is change itself in relation to time that can make us say the “I” first, of coming to see ourselves as multiple, then making that movement, the gesture towards the other, those atoms bonding and breaking up, the other approaching, nearer and nearer, more atoms vibrating, to finally make that movement, to extend your hand and your agitated atoms, together and changing—

—“I accept—”

To Have a Tolerant Mind

by Kirara Wakisaka Senior High School of Kogakuin University

‘How can we contribute to the accomplishment of a peaceful world?’ has been a question I’ve asked myself for a long time. At first, it started off with an answer, “kill all the bad guys”. As I learned and got to understand things, such as history and human nature, my answers shifted over time. For example, the answer that came after “kill all the bad guys” was “follow the rules”. Like my answers have changed in the past, at this moment of my life I have found a new answer to my question.

Since the move from Japan to South Korea when I was small, I’ve witnessed a lot of differences between two countries. The culture was alike, but the impression of each other countries differed a lot. The difference in impression towards each other might be the affect from the education given to the people, as an anti-Japan nation. Fortunately, I didn’t go through some intense racism when I spent my early life in the country, because I went to an international school. However, small misunderstandings between me and my classmates sometimes lead to fights on which country’s character ‘Pokémon’, or which country’s culture ‘Origami’ is. Sometimes, I saw shocking posters and writings in the city, stating some anti-Japanese things. Such small yet giving huge impact happenings are the memories I cherish up to this age, and probably would in the upcoming years of my life.

Even in Japan, my home country, I faced some boundaries. It may have been the effect that I spent time in an international school, but when I temporarily went to the public Japanese school, there were lots of intolerant norms I didn’t fit in.

Some of them are the form of teaching, curriculum, teachers or rules. Especially the rules the teachers set to their students was the challenging thing for me when I look back to those times. For instance, during lunch time, students weren't allowed to leave the classroom to go play at the playground, unless they finished eating everything on their plate. While this rule is respectful to the chefs and to the food, it seemed to be torture for some students, including myself.

Experiencing such incidents and life in different places gave me a hint to the answer I own today. Which is "be tolerant with yourself and others". Tolerance is a word we use to express one's fair, permissive attitude towards the things that differs from the one. Having the mind and room of tolerance in your heart can create deliberate actions with us. Such actions can create a peaceful, positive relationship within others.

Unavoidable Tolerance

by Sara Motojima Senior High School of Kogakuin University

When I was 4 years old, I moved to America. Since I moved to a foreign country at a young age, I had difficulty blending the two countries together. I was still learning about Japan and getting used to my preschool life when I moved to America. My family and I spent the first few years in America getting used to our new life in a new country. After we adjusted and got used to life in America, that was when I realized that my parents and I were on different paths. I was 7 or 8 years old, and my parents sent me to a Japanese cram school where I started taking Japanese classes in a Japanese curriculum. I was basically sent to a Japanese school after “normal school”. I was very confused to why I had to go to a Japanese school until I realized that an American school for me was a “normal school”, but to my parents a Japanese school was a “normal school”. My parents wanted to raise me as a Japanese girl living in America.

Here is the thing about the United States. You can not tell the difference between an “American”, and a “foreigner” just by appearance. All my friends that were Asian were “American”. I was also Asian, but I was not an “American”. My parents knew that, but I didn’t. When I found out that I would never be able to become an “American” unless my parents become “American”, I started to neglect them. I knew that my parents wanted to go back to Japan, and they plan on going back taking me with them “someday”. My parents sometimes gossiped about job openings in Japan. They always talked about the “someday” when we go back to Japan as a family. But “someday” never seemed to come. It didn’t come for 7 years. It was 4 years after attending a “Japanese School”, and 4 years of neglect until

I found out that we were going back to Japan. My 4 years of neglect started shifting to “tolerance”.

I had to start paying attention at Japanese school so that I can keep up with class in Japan. The hardest of all was detaching and neglecting myself from my “normal” life. Announcing to my friends about my move, pretending to listen to information about the big trip that I can’t go to, returning to my home that gets emptier every day, etc. I had to start tolerating the big change in my life which was being a foreigner in America. I had to start accepting that I was a foreigner, something that I used to neglect.

Tolerance is often when you value your thoughts while respecting and accepting other’s thoughts. Tolerance is based off the idea that our values come first and understanding that values of others are important as well. But sometimes, tolerance is something that can’t be helped. From my experience in America, I learned that sometimes tolerance is also when your values must change, and you must learn to accept that your values must change. Tolerance is an unpredictable thing seen everywhere.

Personal Experience Regarding Tolerance

by Soichiro Tanaka Senior High School of Kogakuin University

My personal experience with the topic tolerance (more specifically the tolerance of other cultures in an environment of another) is mixed to say the least. Sometimes when I move to another place I get lucky and meet people who are very open and kind. On the other hand I sometimes do meet people often adults who forced their way of showing respect, manners, and sometimes punishments on to me without knowing how I feel.

When I first went to the United States I was very nervous about what I would experience. The reason being in Japan there were stereotypes about the US often circulating around the media and I was afraid as a kindergartener that I was going to get shot the second I stepped out of the airport.

But my expectation was far different then the reality. The people at least at the community I lived in were very kind and was generous. The community was extremely diverse with people from Japan, Korea, China, Canada, and India all lived close to each other and together with ordinary Americans. So there was a big collection of different cultures in the location. I personally think that the American Community here had a lot of interactions with many other cultures from around the world so the area was more friendly to people from many cultures and backgrounds. Although Gun Violence was higher in the US compared to Japan the area I lived had a relatively few numbers of actual incidents involving guns and although it was higher compared to Japan there was about 1-2 cases per month. My school life there was extremely fun as well. There were various students from the aforementioned countries

living in the area so the cultural tolerance was very high. People talked to each other about their pasts and experiences and often shared their distinctive food with the neighborhood during a festival. The school that I went to had a day called an International day where people from outside of the United States who comes to the school would perform something to show off the cultures of that country. Although a place like this is most probably a rarity in most countries it was an experience I would never forget.

After the years spent in the US me and my family eventually went back to Japan.

When I arrived there I went to a local elementary school near the place I was born. There were several childhood friends who went to that particular school so my parents decided to send me there. When I first arrived the students in the class were very kind and to an extent I think they were also excited since many of them never went outside of Japan before since the place the school was in was in a semi countryside area between the actual country side and the cities. I first thought that I could have an ordinary school life not too different from my life in the US but I came to realize very quickly that the culture in Japan and the US were extremely different. Although I was born in Japan I pretty much grew up in the US and I was used to many of the various and diverse cultures and traditions present there so I ran into issues with some people, specifically some of the teachers in the school who were either very conservative. Most of the teachers who I met with were actually very kind and I personally liked talking to them but there were about 5-6 teachers that were either very strict (Sometimes to the extent of using force), very easily irritated by minor mistakes, and very traditional. My first problem at the school emerged when I personally had issues with bowing, and although I got used to it now, In America and especially the place I lived in bowing was considered an act of submission to a person or an authority figure unlike the meaning in Japan which is meant to show respect. In my American school one of the first things I was taught in 3rd grade by my teacher who I really respected was to never bow down to anyone.

So when I refused to bow in the first lesson the teacher mildly scolded me for it since he thought I was being disrespectful (without each

of us knowing the others interpretation of bowing). In the end the misunderstanding was resolved by another teacher.

Although for the most part other than some minor misunderstandings the regular school life went on with only small incidents but there was one subject that I despised the most which was the Japanese PE. Many of the schools PE teachers were extremely conservative/Traditional so whenever someone was late to the PE class he or she would make the entire class accountable for it since “It was the failure of the entire class to make sure everyone arrives on time” which I didn’t get a single bit. Eventually I was angry to an extent where although I didn’t directly fight them I would rant for an hour or a two at home to my parents about how Intolerant and Inflexible they were. This kind of behavior was not uncommon among many of the teachers even outside of PE and some would go as far as too humiliate someone in front of the class who did something wrong (even a minor one) just to prove a point to everyone and to set an example. I was often caught in the cross fire, in one occasion someone took (but most probably the object got lost during the cleanup time) the teachers note that she kept and she made us sit for nearly an hour and a half after school until the person who did it turned themselves in. She made remarks about how the person who stole it (who she didn’t know) was causing everyone else harm although she was the one who was making everybody stay and I felt disgusted by it. I especially never experienced a punishment like this my entire life and I didn’t see the lesson she was trying to teach other than to assert dominance. Eventually she let the class go but I resented her until the end of the school for that and her remarks.

In all of these occasions I didn’t go by completely quietly in these cases. I not only ranted to my parents about this but I also talked with teachers in the school that I trusted about these methods that some of the teachers used to “teach a lesson” but the teachers that I usually turned to and myself both agreed to not confront those strict teachers directly so not to cause tension in the work-place.

I did think about directly confronting them if things got too bad but I knew that unless my parents gets involved I was going to get scolded.

The environment wasn't good for me to really oppose anything that they do and I didn't want my remaining elementary schooldays to be a constant fight with the teachers over different values so I soldiered through it for the rest of the year.

Looking back on it even into my teenage years I still think that the methods they used were wrong and I also think that the other students in my class should have opposed it more instead of taking it in. I personally am thankful for my friends and some of the teachers who helped me through it by listening to my feelings and adjusting to it. In conclusion from my experience the school should have been more open to people from other cultures and they should have especially been more active in solving problems with cooperations with other teachers.

I believe that the meaning of Tolerance in a social term is to respect the way of thinking and the values of others nearby without changing yourself or to try and change others. I personally am also very stubborn especially when it comes to adjusting to my surroundings so I might accidentally make myself bit annoying, awkward, or outright offensive but I want people to accept me for who I am and if they have any problems with me I would try and adjust a little but I will not change my core self.

The key phrase is, “Love others as you love yourself.”
And that’s all there is to it. Nothing else is required.
That would settle everything. Yes, of course it’s nothing
but an old truth that has been repeated and reread
millions of times—and still hasn’t taken root.

“Awareness of life is a higher order than
knowledge of the laws of happiness.” That’s an
adage that we must fight.

And I shall fight it.

—Fyodor Dostoyevsky



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