

Simply Listening

“One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say” Bryant McGill. When I was younger I would always be so confused when others would refuse to listen. The irony that people can say so much but get so distraught over listening. Ignorance is the poison for the soul and disrespect the dagger to the heart. What someone looks like, acts like, and believes in should not give someone the right to disrespect them.

In the 7th grade during a very exaggerated history lesson I was told something very unexpected by a classmate of mine. That day during class I seemed to be having a good day with a smile on my face which immediately slipped as those words had tumbled out of her mouth. She had judged me by whom she believed me to be by my beliefs and my heritage. It was frustrating and at that moment I was distraught. Do people really think this of me? That I could be such a person due to the stereotypes and prejudice that go along with my heritage and the language that grew along with me through the years. It was frustrating but it did not give me the right to lash out at that girl so with a calm demeanor I ignored her and went back to work.

After that experience I had really disconnected from myself for a while. But I started to find myself through the years as I listened to the people around me. Mostly my teachers who all in a way helped me. The advice they each gave me impacted me in a way that helped create the best me I can be. In my first year of high school as a freshman I had been a nervous over anxious teenager who thought these high school years would control her whole entire future. But I had the voices of the community, mostly the voices of the future community members to guide me to a starting point.

In our Goshen community places that we can improve the skill of listening to diverse voices are schools. Children grow up listening to everything their elders say and mimicking those ideals as they grow up. If schools were to teach children future life skills in the present rather than the future it could really resonate with their paths and set them up for success. Our community as a whole could learn so much from people with different life experiences,

heritages, and backgrounds. Especially so problems like judging someone based on their heritage do not happen again. Help can come in so many different ways so why would listening be such a burden if there's nothing to lose by doing so. To make a positive loving community people need to come together and listen to one another and even if they don't understand they can at least try and get to a certain basis of understanding.

If the people of the Goshen community are trying to make a future for their children shouldn't their children learn the importance of listening? Now in the present is the time to make a change so that the future generations understand the importance of listening to one another not because of their race but because they are human.