

What Will You Do?

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“At the heart of all that civilization has meant and developed is ‘community’ - the mutual cooperative and voluntary venture of man to assume a semblance of responsibility for his brother” (Martin Luther King Jr.). Within these well spoken words describes the generator of a great nation: community. Yet how can one foster this idea of community? The answer is a lot more complicated than one might presume, yet it can be boiled down to one central idea: citizenship. Citizenship is a broad term that encompasses the idea that one should enact their duties and responsibility whether that be through abiding by the law or simply being a respectful person. Now, it can be difficult for one to see where they fit in the grand scheme of things. With difficult actions seeming to make such a small ripple, I would like to take the time to discuss how good citizenship can extend not just locally but globally.

To get a broader idea of how the good qualities of citizenship extend throughout the world, one must first look at examples from the past and our history. One person that I think of that is often forgotten in history is William H. Seward, the Secretary of State under Lincoln; since while Lincoln is often remembered as the freedom bringer to slaves, Seward played a highly influential role. During the Civil War, Lincoln in particular was not interested in freeing the slaves as much as he was in favor of preserving the Union. On the other hand, Seward, a head of the Radical Republicans, fought for the freedom of slaves as well as equality within the laws. It was through his persistent fights with Lincoln that the Emancipation Proclamation came to be, and under Seward's leadership the 14th Amendment. This is a man often forgotten by society, yet had an impact within not only the nation but globally. Now this may seem a little large scale with Seward holding an important part in office, so looking back at the little differences made by people such as Nat Turner shows a more realistic impact. Nat Turner was a simple pastor who

instigated a slave rebellion that swept his community by storm and brought hope to slaves. These men fought for their communities through their compassion and courage showing their devotion.

Now we get to today to see how citizenship continues to help everyone and their communities. Even small actions have a large impact. Take world hunger as an example. According to The World Counts, this year alone, at the time of writing this essay, there have been roughly 1,451,000 deaths from starvation. Compare this number to even 20 years ago: the difference is clear. The World Food Programme believes that by 2030 the fight against world hunger will be over as long as simple, kind, and generous citizens contribute to the cause. This is something that may seem as material as money. However, it can make a huge difference in communities across the world. Not only that, but many impoverished communities in the US can use good citizens to help the citizens flourish.

To drive home my point of how important being a good citizen is, I will share a personal anecdote about how good citizenship has affected my personal life. It is well known that in Oregon there is an opportunity for all 6th grade students to go to outdoor school — a week long camp designed to teach science. It is a great opportunity for students to experience something unique that can be provided for nearly every student in my community. It is an opportunity that would not be possible without the help of high school students volunteering to help counsel. Going to the camp helped me personally develop a keen interest in the field of science, and I would like to think it helped other students in similar ways. The volunteers that helped at the camp did not have to volunteer their week to help the next generation. In fact it is quite a hassle. Despite this, they showed good citizenship qualities when doing so by taking up a responsibility that was not theirs to bear. After that experience, I was dead set on counseling myself, to further help the next generation in hopes they would get to have as great of an experience as I did. I

believe now I have accomplished my goal after counseling a wide variety of camps. Now I can see the fruits of my labor and how they affected the young minds around me whenever the kids say hi to me. Many I see throughout my town and they get giddy with excitement whenever they see me; that's how I know I have made an impact in my community.

Finally, we reach the point where you the reader can step in and show citizenship in the future that can help those around you. Through the help of citizens like you, one can make a big difference within their communities or continue to reach out and affect beyond your communities at a more national level. It is important to show good qualities of citizenship in order for your community to prosper. This can be done through simple acts like showing generosity to strangers, volunteering with local organizations, or even just being a good patriot. These ideas are just scratching the surface of what one can do with a little motivation. One could dive so much deeper and get highly involved with activities that will make a difference to a wider audience. Instead one can focus more locally helping their neighborhood. It is through people willing to help their communities and show good citizenship that the future will prosper. Currently there are many aspects of our world that need change and need to be addressed more frequently in order for the world to prosper. This is my goal: to have a future that can prosper through overcoming hardship. This can only be achieved through good Samaritans who wish to see the world thrive as well.

This is the call to action asking the readers to spread kindness out to local communities with one common theme: a greater tomorrow. During the last few years it has been difficult to look at the news and not be disheartened by what is stated in the papers or online. It seems as if the once good morals of this world have become tainted by trials and tribulations. When all

seems lost and the news no longer shares stories of hope, we must look around us and see how being neighborly can increase the positivity within our communities. For just as good citizenship in the past has drastically helped our lives today, good citizenship still affects our lives in meaningful and impacting ways. This is why as good citizens it is our job to give back to the world around us to ensure a better future for our descendants.

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