

Rheanna Esnrado

I believe in the Golden Rule, which is to treat others how you want to be treated. Respect was one of the earliest things I learned when I was young. I have always been told to respect my parents, classmates, and people around me. Growing up on an island like Unalaska, respect is everywhere. Everyone treats each other nicely, and everyone knows each other. It makes the environment a safe place to be around. However, due to the young naive me being raised here, I was unaware of how different it was in the lower forty-eight. Nowadays, respect is shown differently, and it's hard to differentiate what is genuine respect and what isn't truly respect.

Being raised on an island whose population was a majority of Asians has its perks. We all knew each other and mostly treated each other with respect. We're a tight-knit community that makes sure everyone is okay. However, during these past two years, Asians have been targeted for hate crimes due to the stigma of Covid and Asians together. Because of this, I experienced racism towards myself. I was called racial slurs, and words from the internet threw harmful things my way.

Because of the discrimination I've been faced with, not only because of my skin color but also because of my gender, I want to spark a change in society and make a difference. Educating others about inequity could ignite a chain reaction. As an Asian-American woman myself, I do not condone these actions and believe that I can do my part on equity and advocating for others. Equity exists when people share equal rights, access, opportunities, and outcomes, regardless of characteristics, such as race, social class, gender, or age. I would like to fight against racial inequality and the treatment of people being mistreated and unjustly. I want to give people opportunities and chances of living a fantastic lifestyle without fearing prejudices. I could spread a message among a large group of people to spread equity. I want to start with giving people the space to have their voices heard. With my career in Sociology, I hope to achieve equity by ending the stigmas on racial inequality and mental health within cultures in societies. Many Asians perceive people with dark skin as ugly, and I want to understand why they think that. I also hope to understand why discussing mental health concerns is taboo in Asia. To show equity, I will gain a better understanding of why cultures and societies act the way they act.

With everything that has been thrown at me, I will look up a positive mindset to move forward in the future. I will continue to defend the ones who cannot protect themselves. I will continue to make my voice heard for people who have experienced injustice. I will spread and expand's people's knowledge of prejudice. Speaking up on injustices isn't just defending other races, but it's also a sign of respect. Change starts with one person who can bring together a large group who all want the same result. I would like to be that person.