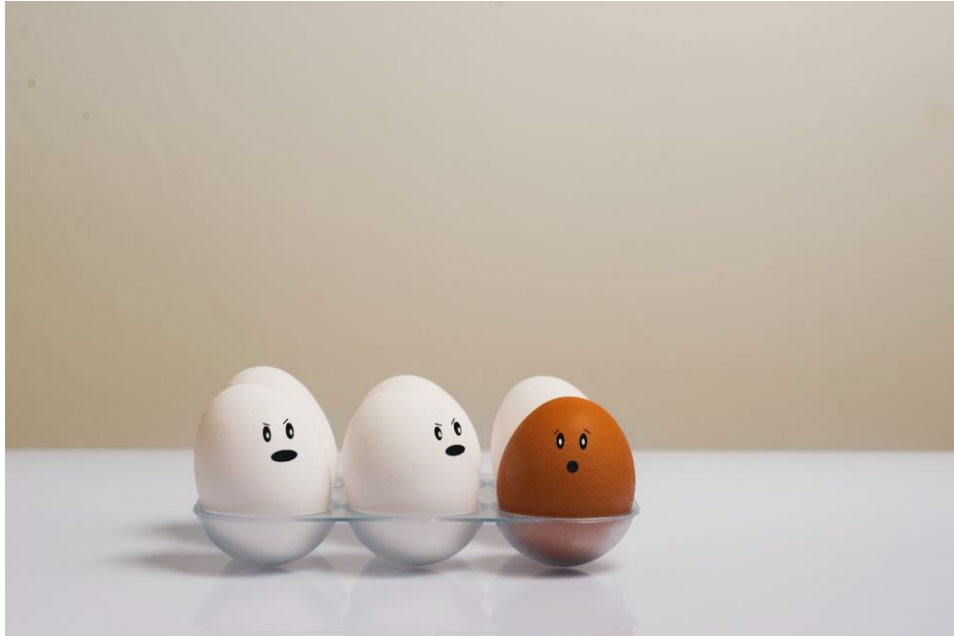


# No More Hate: How We Can End Discrimination and Create a More Inclusive World

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Discrimination is a lifelike scourge of society, a set of psychological and social conditions that entangle the human breath of life, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. Isolation, feeling rejected and finally, the impression of being worthless correlated with the idea of being useless, not only to oneself but also to the world, return as consequences of awful, unjustified and unfair treatment. The internet and the advancement of telecommunications can delude you into thinking that discrimination and hate speech are specific realities of the 21st century. History and common sense reveal the exact opposite: as factual and persistent as the biological nature of humans, insomuch challenging and laborious to be correctly addressed and solved. But not impossible.

It is not a question of when, as discrimination continues from the first few breaths of early society, nor an issue of where, as all parts of the world have been sheltering discriminatory traditions, ideas, practices, policies and laws. More than anything, it's a matter of investigating the whys and hows: why does it happen, how does it happen, and how can we solve it? Keeping in mind the subject of laws, just because something is legal, there's no guarantee that it's also morally right by any consequence, as morality and law do not denote each other. Defending an immoral and discriminatory law, whatever it may be, collides in synonymy with mindless compliance to the status quo, not even bearing close to a sparkle of righteousness. Virtuosity, in this case, resides in taking action: speaking out and standing together against it. The only immediate moral solution is to show a united front against discrimination, abiding by zero tolerance towards hateful behaviour; there's a catch, however, as not putting up with destructive behaviour and criticizing it doesn't pave the way for overtly attacks against the person behind it (a compelling case for ad hominem, the attack of an opponent's character or personal traits in an attempt to undermine their argument). A nuance often overlooked by the streaming tides of mass opinions.

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Complex things, such as discrimination, however, require more than upholding a moral stance. Keeping track of the problem-solving approach, discrimination should be firstly defined, before generating any alternative solutions to what current circumstances bring. Hence, according to the Oxford Learners Dictionary, discrimination is the practice of treating someone or a particular group in society less fairly than others, either because of someone's age, race, gender, or sexual orientation, or due to favors. However, Amnesty International, which is a non-governmental global organization acting on humanitarian aid, brings a more thorough definition, as discrimination is presented in the form of a strike "to the very heart of being human". They also tell that "discrimination occurs when a person is unable to enjoy his or her human rights or other legal rights on an equal basis with others because of an unjustified distinction made in policy, law or treatment".

## **Understand Discrimination by Understanding Humans**

Discrimination goes against the very principle of human rights: the equality of people. Everyone should benefit from fair treatment and respect, no matter what they look like, where they come from, or what their beliefs are, as the act of discrimination can have a lot of harmful effects through its' different forms: ageism (based on the grounds of age), ableism (against people with disabilities), racial (ranking different races as inherently superior or inferior to each other), gender (based on sex or gender, such as sexism), religion (valuing in regards to spiritual beliefs), sexual orientation (based on sexual preferences, such as homophobia), caste (social stratification by endogamy, traditional social interaction, ritual status and hereditary transmission) and even reverse discrimination (against members of a dominant or majority group, to the advantage of minorities or historically disadvantaged groups).

In a related manner, reverse discrimination (which is discrimination against members of a majority in favor of a minority) is not the solution. It does not even come close to what should be the key to solving the issue of hate. The middle ground stands at the advent of compensatory initiatives and policies such as affirmative action. However, the model is controversial and divides public opinion: supporters claim that it promotes equality and representation for groups that bear socioeconomic disadvantages or have faced historical discrimination or oppression. On the other side, the opponents argue that affirmative action resembles reverse discrimination, as it can be a way for the most privileged within minority groups to exploit and benefit over the least fortunate within the majority groups. Under no circumstances an option for peacemaking and ending the wide-ranging and widespread tributaries of discrimination.

But why does it happen? Why do people discriminate? Why do people hate? For what reasons and to what gain, to what goal, one may ask? Besides the idea of pure hate and the conduct stirred out of malady, as is the case for individuals afflicted by personality disorders and traits within the so-called Dark Triad (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy), why do forms of hate exist? Why does discrimination? In an ideal type of situation, we should try to understand why people might discriminate or show hate to others and try to help them see that it's not right. There's absolutely no further need to discriminate against the people behind discrimination, as humanity requires and demands unity: we all can make a difference if we work together to stop discrimination, as the better approach is to show people the correct way. Rehabilitation helps us minimize or slow down the effects of discrimination, not asinine radicalization.

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## End Discrimination Through Proactive Action

After defining and understanding discrimination, the next natural thing is to keep your eyes open for solutions, even if no easy answer endures to this question, just as it is a complex issue with many different perspectives and crucial nature. The first possible answer to solving discrimination is to increase awareness and promote education, as this can help to change attitudes and perceptions, making people aware of the effects of their words and actions. The following step is to reform and reinforce the laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination, deterring people from engaging in malicious activities — but not on unsubstantiated ground and for gains other than social justice, as it was seen with the promulgation of the modification of Law nr. 286/2009 (art. 369), where the legislative proposal meant to criminalize, among fair discrimination against real victims, “discrimination and hate speech based on political affiliation” (who and by what methods could have drawn, if the bill had been approved, a proper line between the fair criticism of Romania's government and so-called "public incitement through hatred against political parties").

Ending discrimination is nowhere near black-and-white problem-solving. Call to mind the case example the contemporary Australian philosopher Peter Singer brought to debating: a restaurant owner who does not want to hire an African American. Why? Because he is afraid he may lose his clients, many of his customers are racist and rather inclined to stop coming to his restaurant than be served by an African American. The restaurant owner does not hold any racist beliefs, but he is concerned about the possibility of having his livelihood harmed by helping the African American. What would you do in his place? How would you try to solve the situation? Would you try to educate your customers, even if you could lose money in the short term? Thinking through the bird's eye view and putting yourself in other people's shoes is paramount to bring a unique perspective that may level the game of solving discrimination; after all, creativity and inventiveness require empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Taking into account the point made for rehabilitation in the previous blocks of text, it is not only wise and for the benefit of another, but also yours, to exercise compassion and insight even into the souls of those who can't see a better way at the moment. Your mission is to be their trigger to change from bitterness to betterness.

Last but not least, it is foremost to provide support and assistance to those who have been the victims of discrimination, as this can help them to heal and rebuild their lives — encourage people to focus on their strengths, core values and beliefs, to motivate them and to alleviate the nefarious effects of unsupported bias. And you, too, can be an active game-changer in reconstructing their being and social entity, making your voice heard, through friends, at school or university, or through social media engagement, remembering the true power of advertising and visibility, not for money, but the greater good. Keep your local, regional, national and even international stakeholders and decision-makers accountable, as you remember: discrimination haunts as a crime against the soul of humanity, against every drawn breath of hope and progress, and ultimately a crime against you, the keeper of justice.

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