

“TIGHT” WRITING EXERCISE

ORIGINAL VERSION :

1. Be intolerant of intolerance

The first thing we have to do is make it clear that racism, discrimination, and intolerance are no longer values that we as a society will value. That means confronting other white people and making *them* feel marginalized for behaving in ways that do harm. You have to stand up against friends, relatives, and even strangers when you hear them saying racist or discriminatory things.

It's not that hard; you say “What the hell is wrong with you?” and you walk away. One instance might not make a difference, but if it happens often enough, and if white racists learn that intolerance costs them social standing, they will eventually change — after all, the whole motive behind most white racism stems from loss of status.

The one exception is when you witness actual discrimination against another person. In those cases it is your responsibility to defend that person, not only by condemning the hate speech, but by staying with that marginalized person and treating them as an actual human being. You want to help people feel safe? Then forget your safety pin and do the work of actually helping people feel safe. (191 words)

How many words can you eliminate without changing the meaning? Work on it yourself before you read my attempt below. Maybe you can do even better ...

1. Be intolerant of intolerance - Make it clear that racism, discrimination, and intolerance are no longer attitudes we as a society will value. Confront other white people and make *them* feel marginalized for behaving in ways that do harm. Stand up to friends, relatives, and even strangers when they say racist, discriminatory things.

It's not that hard; you say “What is *wrong* with you?” and you walk away. If it happens often enough and white racists learn that intolerance costs them social standing, they will eventually change.

When you witness actual discrimination it is your responsibility to defend that person by condemning the hate speech and by staying with that marginalized person and treating them as an actual human being. (121 words)

***If you'd like more practice, email me for a copy of the entire article in its original form.
NancyNRice@hotmail.com***