

“First-Year Writing Seminar: The Podcast,” Season 1

Episode Transcript: Caroline Little on “Contributing to a Larger Community”

I believe that contributing to a larger community is the best way to live your life. I believe that helping others also benefits yourself. I believe that recognizing how your actions affect others is the most important factor of living. Everyone is connected in one way or another, and not having the compassion required to care for others leads to a negative world. One’s responsibility is to their community, not just to themselves.

I believe by choosing to help others, one is expanding their personal responsibility. Not just by giving money to the homeless, but by being present for a friend that is struggling. I have found that by being a sounding board, a person that is free of judgement meant to only listen, my friends come to me and trust me more when their problems. My best friend Harley was having a rough week, but she is always happy and upbeat. She didn’t feel comfortable sharing her sadness with the world, so when we sat down for lunch, nothing seemed off. I have learned the best way to promote this openness and care for other is outright say it. “Harley, I want you to know if something is wrong, you can talk to me about it.” She answered, “actually, something has been bothering me.” And the conversation flowed from there. You do not need to end world hunger to make an impact in other people’s lives, you can make a difference by small interactions. Your community can relate to the people directly around you, and the care you show for them can go a long way.

I believe that your personal responsibility is linked to your awareness. Not everything that occurs in the world will directly affect you. However, it could affect someone which would affect someone else, and so on until it came right back to you. Recognizing how this will affect you is required when learning about care and compassion for one’s community. The amount you stay conscious of different issues in your community, whether it be the world community or your friend group, is mirrored by how you interact with your community. We are not always told about what happens in places far away from us. I knew nothing about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before this year, but it affected the United States, which affect our elected officials, which would then affect my vote. I might not see this in my personal community, but seeing it affect others motivated me to do something about it. Our responsibility is not just to serve ourselves, but care and have compassion to other in different situations than our own. By staying informed on what is happening around me, I could better serve my community, with volunteering efforts or educating others on communities they might never have heard of. Care for worldly events and how they would affect others is necessary when analyzing your personal responsibility.

I believe that a few people can change the world. By caring about your community one can recognize that importance of helping those within it. Our world community is constantly changing, and people have many different experiences within it. Some are born in the middle tier of society. Monetarily well-off, feel secure in their own homes, and eat every day. Few are born with more wealth than they will ever spend, and no fears in the world besides losing it. Many are born into a different category. They are born into war zones, places without running water, places with large food insecurity, places that you

would not want to live. But they can't leave. They don't have a choice on who runs their life or what happens to them. Having a care for your community can help. My high school groups worked hard to create food banks multiple times a month to help the children among us that were struggling with basic necessities. I was able to recognize the benefits I had, and how those could help others. Donating old winter clothes, sending in canned foods I was never going to eat, or spending my time cleaning up my community was the best way I could help. Staying aware of the situations around you will change your perspective, and help people you never thought you could. Human race is truly one group. Staying worldly, keeping perspective on one's own life, and contributing to those suffering are easy ways to practice social responsibility. These people can change the world, and caring about their community is the way to change.

Our job in life is not to only look out for ourself. It is not to make choices with our personal best interests at heart. It is not ignoring other people's problems. It is to recognize how the world works. How every small thing affects our community. I believe that this care for others will create a better world for us to live in. I believe that contributing to your larger community is the best way to improve your personal and social responsibility.