

First-Year Writing Seminar: The Podcast, Season 3

Episode Transcript: Joan Nasara on “Collaborating and Contributing to a Global Society”

(Music interlude)

Introductory speaker:

Our main focus today is on the topic of Collaborating and Contributing to a Global Society. Stay tuned as we discuss issues and situations that lead to a better understanding of the level of ignorance on the topic of collaboration and contribution in a global society. (Pause) What is Collaboration and contribution and how does it relate to global awareness in our society? Collaboration is defined as the ability to work competently with two or more people, contributing can also be defined as a relationship between two or more people coming together to achieve a common goal. This is an essential part of the society which involves everyone working together in order to achieve a common goal, in the sense of equity, diversity and inclusiveness. I have Joan Nasara (applause) who shares her story with us. Please follow along and let us know what you think.

Speaker, Joan:

I believe that equity and diversity in the community is a key point that needs to be emphasized. It is an aspect of communal living that is still yet to be embraced completely in the world. When I was in elementary school I got bullied by other girls. At the time I was 10 years old, I lived with my parents and 3 siblings in the city of Wilmore, Kentucky. It was in 2011, the month of January. This was my first time arriving in the United States, everything was new to me, and I loved it and appreciated the beautiful sites, and the activities my family and I participated in were great. We did stuff like kayaking, and I was always so excited and full of energy whenever we would go out. My grandma, who is not actually my grandmother but insisted we call her grandma, Mary Miller, a very loving and caring lady who welcomed us into her home with open arms, helped us move into our own house and even gave us one of her cars. Soon the summer was over and it was time to return to school, for me I was just starting fifth grade and I had no clue what to expect, being in a foreign country and although a lot of adjustment to the system had to occur, there were some differences such as food, and the use of the computers during classes and exams was all new to me because we just used paper, unless it was a computer class. Anyways, I was first taken around for easier directions of the classes, the music room, art room and all that, I was introduced to the different classes I would be a part of, I remember being so excited and thinking wow! This is so cool! I was very excited to ride the bus that week, the road at a certain point was a hill and then when the bus went over that hill, I would feel like my stomach was dropping, <3. It was such a rush, we arrived and I went to the homeroom. The first thing we did was listen to channel 1 news and say the pledge of allegiance, before heading to my first class which was PE, everyone had welcomed and said they were happy to meet me, a week into being there this girl started pointing at me from time to time, they would laugh and then go back to their work. I went on thinking it wasn't a big deal, assuming it was just a one time thing. After

that day it became more frequent, they would call me names like 'ant', or say that I had "snakes on my hair" which they referred to as my braids. It made me really down at that point, I was at a hard low because I had never been bullied before nor had I heard about how to defend yourself whenever that happens to you. My grades started dropping and I no longer wanted to come to school. I didn't want to talk much because I had nothing to say, they would ask questions like, "Did I live in the trees where I am from?" which naturally I would, I replied and said "no, we build and live in houses like yours and we wear clothes as well". I did not understand that at that time there was a lot of ignorance they had regarding other cultures, they probably were not exposed to other cultures before. This cycle continued up until I was in middle school, even though this was a new set of people, some new students got transferred to the school I attended, "West Jessamine Middle School" where I went through 6th and 7th grade. I can also clearly remember I was the only black person in my entire grade for two years, ranging from 5th to 6th grade before another student of my complexion came along in 7th grade. I felt so alone and the only friends I had were in another school called East Middle school. It definitely was a tough period for me, but I was able to understand and realize in the 7th grade that it didn't matter what they said to me, unless I took their words to heart.

I did not give much care to the words that were said to me after that because my dad always said to me "be strong even in the face of adversity", encouraging me whenever I felt low. This statement didn't mean much to me when I was younger, and thinking about that time and my present, they are not really different, except that now I have a healthy community that I can learn from, where my opinions actually matter at Cottey College. Going through this tough season in my life I did not adhere to what my dad had said though. I didn't retaliate or give in to the taunts I got from them, because I understood that they didn't have any knowledge of my country, so even if they meant for their words to have a negative impact, I was not going to give in and succumb to the pressure of their words.

In conclusion I would like to restate that community is an essential part of upbringing and nurture, where I am from we have this saying "it takes a whole village to raise a child", therefore the respect and acknowledgement of the environment and people in it. The manner in which I grew up around me shaped my behaviors and how I behave or react to certain things. My family's acceptance of everyone whom we met is a key reason why I never took the taunts and jokes about me personally, it didn't aggravate me or make me feel less of myself because I had a very supportive group of people in my community. They helped me see that even in the bad times there is still good going on, it's just the tough situations weigh on our minds more than the good. I'm so grateful for my family and the friends in my community because I was free to express myself and open to learning from others as well. I believe that you can also find that special support group that helps you out whenever you're feeling low and unable to see the good in the things that you do.

Thank you for joining us, once again I am Joan Nasara. Have a wonderful day everyone join us next time.

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