
The Importance of Gender Diversity

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If I told you to think of the color pink, which gender would you associate it with? The answer seems obvious. Somehow it has always been like this: two genders, two colors, all within one species we call human beings. Gender is a fundamental aspect of our society, shaping our identities and experiences.

When a baby is born, they are assigned a sex: male or female. As the child grows up, they are given a label of a boy or girl. It feels permanent, like a tag that is stuck to a person for the rest of their life, unless they make the difficult decision to change it. Genders come with social norms and roles deeply embedded into cultures. But do we ever question whether this is truly the correct way? I believe that every child, every human, has the right to feel comfortable in their own skin. And if that means they must alter their gender to align with their identity, then they should have every right to do so.

For further understanding, gender diversity is the acceptance of all genders and identities that transcend beyond the binary. For many individuals, being gender diverse is a way to freely express themselves, without feeling constrained to a specific gender. Conversations around gender equality and diversity have only gained momentum recently. The word “LGBTQ+” was created in the early 19th century, and 10 years ago, California became the first state to teach these topics in schools. Despite many years of oppression and growth, many people and cultures still lack acceptance of gender diversity.

Growing up in Australia, I observed firsthand how people beyond the binary or non-conforming to gender norms were perceived as “not normal”. I remember one of my classmates in 4th grade, Monica. I saw her in class, mostly sitting alone if a friend was not there. Monica was the “weird kid”. Yet in the few times I spoke to her, she was kind. I did not know her well, but I knew she was not as weird as everyone made her seem. It hurts to think about the fact that she was excluded solely because she was gender fluid. Gender fluid is a term used for people who do not identify as having one fixed gender. When she told everyone that her pronouns were “she, they, them and her,” it left some people confused, and kids made jokes about it. However, confusion cannot justify disrespect. More importantly, a person’s gender should never be a reason for discrimination. Monica was in a sense different; she did not conform to a specific gender, but we should have known that it was okay. The rest of us did not understand her, because we did not feel the same way. Nevertheless, people should not have to be fully understood, to be respected and accepted for who they are. While I could blame it on the fact that we were only kids, this also proves how gender norms and stereotypes are

planted in our minds from such an early age.

Recognizing these challenges is vital; I stand by the belief that no one should ever feel like they do not belong. No one should have to apologize for their gender. If I could go back to that classroom 4 years ago, I would give everyone a piece of my mind. I still occasionally hear or see disrespectful gender-related statements at school, in social settings and most commonly online. Research from ‘The Trevor Project.org’ shows that “LGBTQ+ young people are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers.” Not because of their gender identity, but rather because of the bullying and harassment that comes with it. This is serious, and we must break this cycle, to protect the lives of innocent people. To prevent the experiences of Monica and many others. Without gender diversity, society can miss out on so much skill, creativity, and experience.

Ultimately, it is everyone’s responsibility to learn to accept gender diversity. All of us have the power to make change in society. We can start by being mindful and putting unfair judgments to rest. Gender diversity enriches our society, so it is only right that we embrace it with open minds and hearts. As educated individuals, we have a responsibility to teach future generations the importance of it. Not everyone must agree, but everyone should learn to respect it. Gender should not be a barrier that stops people from experiencing their full potential. I urge you to reflect on my message, think about how you perceive people, and seek areas for improvement. Taking the first step is never easy, but these steps can lead us all into a brighter future.

Works cited:

Paragraph 3: <https://genderrights.org.au/information-hub/what-is-gender-diversity/>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2021/03/06/lgbtq-history-equality-education-act-teachers/6648601002/>

Paragraph 5: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>