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Ethical Contention Paper

## **Equality**

Throughout time, the term “equality” has had different meanings. Although the definition remains the same, people associate it with what the social issue of the day or time is. A hundred years ago it was women’s rights, now it is equal rights for gay marriage. In America we strive for equality. Our Declaration of Independence even states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” (National Archives and Records Administration).

Since 1776, we have come a long way. We have changed from men being created equal to men and women, white and black. But there are still many minorities that do not have a voice, in this so-called “land of the free.” Social justice for equality is an issue that still has many strides to make, so that every man, woman, and child in America has the right to be free without the harsh judgment of those who consider themselves to be superior to others, thereby being ethnocentric. Ethnocentrism is defined as the idea that one’s own group’s way of thinking, being, and acting in the world is superior to others (Sorrells, 2013). These kinds of principles is what I feel to be

not only unethical, but our country's downfall to achieve equal rights for everyone in our country.

In a newsletter, written by Kim Peterson, (2011) she discusses how she feels about ethics and equality, and also mentions the “we are all created equal” verse from the Declaration of Independence. “We are all created unique, each person with his own strengths and weaknesses. From this mindset, how ‘we’ value certain attributes determines how ‘we’ view equality among humans. Society values certain attributes more than others; consequently, individuals proficient in certain skills or possessing other attributes valued by society will be treated differently than individuals who do not possess society’s valued skills or attributes.” She goes on to say that the phrase is a “platitude” and that “It would have been much more honest to simply state that we are all different; nevertheless, we are all entitled to equal rights, and importantly, because it is not stated in the Declaration of Independence, equal conditions.”

Since ethics is defined as “rules of conduct or moral principles that guide individual group behavior” (Cardon, 2013) it is important to know how what ethics has to do with equality. Everyday there are stories, and videos, and blogs of people being treated unfairly because of who they are. Americans want to have the feeling that everyone in America is treated fairly, and equally, when that is simply just not the case. We paint a picture of freedom, and equality that draws so many other people to our country, yet everyone in our country is not completely free. People still have to fight for their rights. Rights to be who they are, instead of what society believes that they should

be. Rights to have a life worth living. The right to be able to say they are proud to be a part of our great country.

In order for America to have equal rights, it has to start with our own personal ethics. If people were to willing to get rid of their belief in ethnocentrism, and believe more in people, as individuals instead of not like everybody else, we could achieve a goal of pure equality. One ethic, treat others, as you would like to be treated, is something everyone could stand to gain. It does not hurt someone if one man loves another man, or if a Chinese woman spoke Chinese to her daughter, or even if a woman wants to apply for a man's job.

Everyone is unique, but that does not mean we should exile what makes them unique. Instead we should embrace what makes them who they are, and be proud to say that everybody's uniqueness is what makes America beautiful. Because America is beautiful. We have a country made up of people from all over the world, from all different backgrounds, and all types of gender. That is our uniqueness; people are drawn to it, yet we still have people that are not willing to embrace it themselves.

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