

2015 Spread the Word to End the Word Essay Contest

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- Essay Theme: Erase the R-Word
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- Grade: 7th

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Eraser the R-Word

If you were caught saying bad language in class, you'd probably get in trouble, right? Well, what if you said the word "retard"? Many teachers don't even lift a finger when the R-word is spoken, which isn't very responsible. Calling someone the R-word is like calling someone stupid, dumb, or weird. In fact, the definition of "retard" is to be slow or limited in education and/or emotional development. Today, many people are using the R-word especially when it comes to people with disabilities. What they don't know is that the R-word hurts those who it is used against, and they can't even do anything about their disabilities. Those people are no different than you and me, and have feelings, too. "Pulling someone down never helps you reach the top" (Anonymous). So, I believe we should erase the R-word.

When my older sister was born, she had a heart defect, and couldn't breathe very well. Even then, my family told her she could go and play with the other children. They did this because she wanted to be treated like everyone else. They never thought of her as a bit different. Instead, they thought of her as someone even more special. If anyone had anything else to say, they weren't worthy of being friends with her. So everytime I see me sister, I think of the word "acceptance", because you should accept all people, no matter what your differences are. Why would you use the R-word against someone like my sister?

Another thing to remember is that people with disabilities are a lot stronger than you think. A girl named Jessica Long is an example. She is missing both of her legs, but she never gave up on her dream to swim. Now, she has 12 world records of her own, and 9 champion swimmer medals. Not only her, but 19-year old Julie Johnston is another amazing person. She is blind, and has dwarfism. To be specific, Julie is less than 3 feet tall. On the other hand, she submitted in and won an essay contest, and now goes from place to place as a public speaker. My point is, I believe there are many people with disabilities who achieve more than the average human does, so you shouldn't think of them as someone unworthy to be your friend.

My other thought is that many disabled people are coming into society; they are everywhere we look. Instead of staying inside, they are now going to school, or work like everyday people. No, they ARE everyday people. So when you call them things like the R-word, it takes away their pride as citizens, or even human beings. You shouldn't think of people with disabilities as people who are different than you, you should think of them as people who are a lot like you.

People with disabilities are kind-hearted, and very gentle. Even when you hurt them with such harsh words, they will still unconditionally love you. Still, it still hurts them so much. They

would probably be a very good friend who would stick by you forever. Don't forget that people with disabilities achieve a lot, and are a lot similar to you than they are different. That is why I am saying this: Erase the R-word.