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### The Power of Civility Through Diverse Perspectives

In response to “The Power of Hello,” an essay written by Howard White, we as a society usually take for granted the power of acknowledging others. In a highly technologically driven society like today, most individuals are “glued” to a screen for a majority of the day. In his essay, White addresses the importance of breaking free from the social norm and addressing those in our daily lives. The essence of a simple “hello” not only can brighten someone else’s day, but it can also be used as a stepping stone in opening up countless opportunities for oneself. For example, White explained that through this way of life he was able to gain the courage to set up a meeting with the founder of the company he worked for. If it was not for this opportunity, White would never have become the vice president of the *Jordan Brand* at Nike. I felt personally moved by the message that White provided and I reflected upon my own life. Not only will I try to adopt White’s way of life, but I will also try to break free from “the glue” of my phone screen—something I feel that everyone should try to do.

Other than being constantly on our phones, another negative aspect of our society is prejudice. Prejudice not only showcases the uncivil side of our society, but it has been at the heart of many political and social upheavals throughout our history. This was one of the main ideas in Carolyn Hax’s column. In her column, written as a letter to a reader, Hax states that an optimistic view of life demands that one meets new situations and people with an open mind. I not only agree with this claim, but I also found that it built upon the same message Howard

White portrayed in his essay. Unfortunately, I feel as a society we are quicker to judge other people and close ourselves off rather than having an open mind. In her own words, Hax states, “when we prejudge, we close doors, deny opportunities, marinate ourselves in the past.” The part of this quote that speaks to me the most is the mention of marinating ourselves in the past. Our own nation’s history has had plenty of injustices based on prejudice. When prejudice is exercised today we are no better than the mistakes of our own past.

However, one can always learn from mistakes of the past and convey a message of civility. In the Student Code for the University of Illinois, it is clear that prejudice will not be tolerated or exercised by both the students as well as the university itself. At the same time, the rules and regulations set forth in the Student Code convey equal rights and responsibilities for the students attending the university. For example, the classroom experience of a student will not be met with censorship from both peers and instructors. Being a civil individual is not only a part of what it means to be a civilian, but it also highlights what it means to be a member of a community, where all individuals are guaranteed equal rights and responsibilities.