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The Influential Impact of Short-Term Decisions: A Critical Response to Three Sources

Every single person on earth has a choice to either go about life in a positive light or down a negative path. As Carolyn Hax explains, it is much easier to look at the down side of life. Working hard to stay happy in the short term will lead to a life that minimizes stress. When Howard White's mother became angry with him for not speaking he could have felt embarrassed and angry with his mother for making a big deal out of a small issue. Instead, White decided to take heed to what his mother said and her words essentially shaped his life. White made a conscious short-term choice to look at his mother's fussing in a beneficial way and that had a long-term effect on his everyday life. Little did he know; young Howard White was using his inalienable right of choice. His right of choice is even protected by the student code at the University of Illinois, for it is refreshing to understand that my rights as a human and as a citizen are not diminished upon my attendance to an educational institution.

In the University of Illinois' student code, it is made clear that students have rights through being a citizen while attending this school. Although students have all of the rights granted by the U.S. Constitution, schools expect students to be responsible members of the learning community. In article 1, section 1 of the student code it is stated that students at least "have the rights and responsibilities common to all citizens, free from institutional censorship." I strongly agree with the idea of my rights as a student and citizen being respected concurrently. Most would think that this is a basic right in the United States, but during my entire high school

career my rights as a citizen were essentially voided as soon as I walked into the building. Therefore, the fact that I am seen as a citizen in a school setting is exciting to me and it is a feeling that more high school students should be able to experience. If I could, I would go and talk to someone about the censorship of high school officials over students.

Howard White wrote a very powerful yet simple essay entitled “The Power of ‘Hello’.” White’s is making a simple but powerful claim in his essay which is that something as simple as acknowledging people is a tool that can get someone very far in life. White explains how he would say hello to the founder of the company he works for, and through White’s simple acknowledgment of his boss on a regular occasion he was at a level of comfort with the founder to ask him if they could have a meeting. During the meeting White’s founder said that he could make it far in his company, and now White is the Vice President of that same company. In the beginning of Howard White’s essay, he said, “I believe every single person deserves to be acknowledged, however small or simple the greeting.” I strongly agree with his statement because it reminds me of my parents telling me to always treat others how you would want people to be treated. This reading reassured me on how far being polite can take me in life.

Despite the fact that Carolyn Hax wrote a very uplifting column, it is clear to see that Hax’s main argument is that it is very easy to be angry. She explains that it is a lot easier to think of your office meeting as “another bleeping meeting,” but it is a little more difficult to look at an office meeting “as a way to leave your desk, see some people, and even scam a donut.” My favorite statement in Hax’s column is that “Choosing optimism is choosing vulnerability and humility on an ongoing basis, and that’s often in conflict with our nature.” I strongly agree with statement through my spirituality. That sentence sounds similar to a verse I read in the Holy Bible. One of my favorite verses states that “anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word

cheers it up” (King James Bible, Proverbs 12.25). I wonder if Carolyn Hax is aware of the connection between her statement and some of the teachings the Bible.

Writing this essay has taught me that it is possible to find connection between an array of passages if you search deep enough. I found that three completely different articles all are connected. The string that connects these passages to one another is called like, and life is all about making decisions. All three of the sources have nothing to do with God, but together they are working well to develop my relationship with God. As a citizen and Child of God I plan to follow all laws like in the student code of conduct as long they do not violate any of my moral laws. Hax and White give me optimistic thought about how to make the best of any situation and this ideology furthers my trust in God through my belief in his ability to not put too much on me that I cannot bear. The University of Illinois gives students the ability to make decisions through the same laws we are expected to follow as citizens. With this in mind, it is important to use our power of choice to make the decision in such a way that we look at life in a positive aspect the way Carolyn Hax explains, and similar to the way Howard White did as a child.