

A Positive Way to Positive Thinking
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My best friend Jojo and I are riding on the up escalator to the second floor of the mall. We are in search for a pair of cool sunglasses, not aware of anything else. I should have known better when I was putting on my sandals that afternoon. As we were getting off the escalator, this old, gray-haired lady stepped on my bare toes.

“Oww, Owww!” I cried in sheer pain. “That lady stepped on my foot,” I told Jojo, hopping on one foot, clutching the other one. Normally, a person would expect some sort of apology. Maybe my views were distorted, when the lady turned her head over her shoulder and started calling out racial slurs at me.

“You Chinese jerk,” she told me. “Grow up and act like a lady.” What? Did my ears deceive me? Here I am with my friend trying to fulfill our innocent teenage years at the mall, when I encounter something... wrong. Racial remarks in the 1990s? Oh, right, I forgot. The civil rights movement helped people to be equal, but it didn’t change the minds of racists. The old lady — or better yet, I was probably lucky that I was in one of my “better moods.”

I figured I had three options in response to this lady’s remark. I could either a) ignore the comment of this confused citizen and walk on with Jojo as if nothing was wrong when actually something was wrong, b) totally take it personally, provoke animosity and make the public think we both needed help, not just her, or c) go home and type a fabulous essay and win a chance to be in the *World Tribune*. So here I am typing. Truthfully, that’s what I did. I just hooked arms with Jojo, turned around and started walking the other way. A coward you call me? I don’t think so. I was taught to walk away from fights. Why would I make this incident the exception?

Being a victim of racism, I didn’t take it personally. I think that is the worst thing one can do. I’m not wise with age or a philosopher. Instead of using your energy to fight back, you can use it in a positive manner. Walking away is the first step. I could have wasted my time and mind to scream at the lady, but I used my energy in a more constructive way. As much as it hurts for strangers to make racial remarks, turn your back! They are creating their own bad causes for themselves and will even regret stepping on your precious toes (or whatever the case may be).

Since I practice Buddhism, I feel I am always protected. The old lady is someone I can learn from of what to do and what not to do. She was a coward, not even bothering to say what she felt to my face but instead over her shoulder. Maybe I am taking this too seriously. The lady could have had a bad day and needed to let her frustrations out on me. Whatever her problem was, I felt I did the right thing. The human race is great for one thing: We are all different and will always be different. The SGI is diverse and has taught me to accept people for who they are. I have learned to interact with all different people without feeling that it’s wrong.

Both the lady and I are humans. Yet, I am more humanistic than her. I can look at people from the outside and not judge them without knowing how they are inside. The key on learning how to be more humanistic is to use energy in a positive way against racism, sexism and other things. If everyone did that, as a whole the human population would be better.

And the second step. Writing essays about human diversity to get published in a country-wide newspaper (or whatever the case may be).

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