

Third Place
Senior High Division
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Throughout my entire life I have learned not to judge or condemn people just because they may be different. At a very young age I would frequently visit my uncles residence in California, and I always had a wonderful time. I was extremely young and naïve and to me my uncle was perfect. As I grew older and my trips grew longer, I realized that there was something different about him. When we walked into stores, people would occasionally laugh or sneer at him. After this happened several times, I was so infuriated I decided to investigate. Not long after the last disturbance, I discovered that he had “come out of the closet.” At first I was shocked, I couldn’t believe it. After some serious contemplation, I decided he’s still my wonderful uncle with the same admirable qualities I so appreciated; why should his sexual preference destroy my love. He is my uncle, and I love him unconditionally.

I do not understand how people scrutinize and belittle people just because they are different. My uncle has gone through so much ridicule because he has a different outlook on life. He is a magnificent person, and he deserves to be respected and not looked down upon. When I was younger we were taught to respect everyone and not judge others just because he/she may be different. Now that I am older I see that that rule obviously does not truly apply to everyone. My uncle is treated like he is a monster by some individuals. I do not know how people can be so cruel to him just because of his sexual preference.

Even though my uncle has chosen a different lifestyle from the one I would have, I respect his decision. It’s difficult for me to understand how America, a country which professes to be proud of its diversity, individualism, and tolerance can be so insensitive and unrelenting toward this one particular issue.

My uncle is simply following his heart, and I’m sure he put a great deal of thought into his decision. I don’t feel we have the right to judge others; ultimate judgment will be eventually made by a much higher power.

I have learned many things from my uncle. He has taught me to not care what people think of me, no matter what the circumstances may be. I have also realized that I should be proud of who I am and never allow others to make me feel different about myself.

My uncle and his partner live a happy life in California, but it is also filled with many hardships. They understand that the way of life that they have chosen for themselves will always be looked down upon by some. In their hearts, they know what they are doing makes them happy, and it feels right. No one should be able to ruin that feeling for someone else, no matter what the scenario. They are both very happy, and it hurts me to see people look down on them. It saddens me to know that they probably will never be treated with the respect they deserve.