



20/21 REFLECTIONS

Chapter 24 – Do the Right Thing

In 1989, Spike Lee’s masterpiece Do the Right Thing invited audiences to wrestle with (among other things) the complexities involved in how we go about creating a more equitable world.

32 years later, this message feels just as relevant, raw, and timely. There isn’t space in this reflection to analyze, let alone resolve, these complexities. But let me say, I do believe that one small piece of this very large puzzle—one way that we can all make a difference—is through simple acts of goodness committed each day.

And that is what today’s reflections are about. The two reflections I am going to share were sent to me some weeks back, but both have messages that are timeless. They provide an important reminder that when the journey is long and tough, we can continue to make progress as long as we keep doing the right thing, one step at a time. This reminder is important now that students have returned to campus; it will be important next fall when students return from summer break; and it will continue to be important throughout the long path to recovery that lies ahead.

The first reflection comes from Talia Guppy, a Mental Health Practitioner with Human Relations, Diversity and Equity. Thank you, Talia!

Talia's Reflection

During this time of a global pandemic and social unrest, I have been, like many, forced to confront those things that are right in front of me. It has also been a time of reflection and growth. This introspection has been a reminder of how much we need each other emotionally, physically, psychologically. Like many, my well-being has been challenged and I've struggled with staying healthy and I've had to take measures to make sure that I do so. Never have the words self-care been more important and necessary as during this time.

Now, we are preparing for yet another change... a return to campus. While some are excited to be back in person, many are also anxious and scared. This was always going to be difficult and now the time has come to face this head on.

Many times during the last year, I was left with feelings of helplessness as I saw what was going on around me and the realization of the limitations of what I am able to do. Then I would have to remind myself of how change really happens... person to person, smile to smile, one kind act that sets off a ripple effect to many.

Today, I am hopeful that this is one step closer to something we are able to do... to show up, in person, and face the challenge.

So, today I hope to remind you all that what we do, what we say, who we are matters and our being makes a difference to all of those around us... virtually and in person. When it gets hard to know what to do, just do the next right thing, because it's always time to do what's right.

The second reflection comes from Benita Bodnar, School Nurse at Carlson Home/Hospital. Thank you, Benita!

Benita's Reflection

These months have been overwhelming just trying to get through a day. It is exhausting to be constantly mindful of protocols to avoid the coronavirus,

focusing on my work and adjusting living conditions to continually create a safe environment inside and outside of home.

And then, there is the role of decency in my life. I can never de-value simple, honest decent behavior. Decency is hard to define. It is also difficult to act. That is why, it is important for leaders to be consciously responsible for it.

Sincerely,

Pia, Talia, and Benita