

James A. Blatt
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Blinders of Personal Experience

Critical Thinking Essay #1

The blinders of personal experience are self-imposed limits on our own empirical experience with the world which blind us to realities outside of our own subjective views. Limiting your world-view to one perspective is inherently dangerous. Bias and prejudice, such as with racism, xenophobia or homophobia, are founded in closed-minded subjectivity. Being inclusive means embracing multiple viewpoints across the entire span of world-views. Not only does being locked into one subjective perspective detract from understanding and knowledge, but it is also stultifying and can be divisive. To be liberal, within the definition of broad-minded and tolerant, is to be accepting that others don't share the same life experience you do and theirs is as valid as yours regardless of station in its own unique way.

I am a happy, healthy, well-adjusted adult gay man. I grew up gay in a straight world. I was informed from a young age forward that I was expected to be attracted to girls, play sports with boys, go traipsing through woods and be a boy scout before gay youth were accepted. The male stereotype of grow up rough and tough was pushed on me from a young age, to include marry a woman and have kids. I was never nurtured to accept myself, or even confront myself, and instead I suffered learning condoms were sinful and homosexuals sinners by way of Catholic school catechism. I was thoroughly conditioned, and fully expected, to be heterosexual and ended up a twisted angsty

young teenager over what I had been taught, and therefore believed, were sinful same-sex perversions.

Had I had just one happy, healthy, well-adjusted adult gay man role-model in my life, or some nurturing counselor who would've worked with me through coming out and understanding my sexuality, I firmly believe I'd have had an easier time at my first attempt at adulthood. Instead, I used drugs and fell into a crowd of peers who would accept anybody as "in" so long as they brought drugs to the party, or money to buy them with, instead of staying where I should have been which was at the valedictorian's study group I was invited to back in 12th grade.

My story was to self-repress and self-deny based upon not conforming in a fundamental way to a world-view I was taught explicitly rejected me. As a teenager I rejected gay people before embracing full acceptance, but in the midst as a young adult I ended up coming out while hopelessly trapped in active addiction. Based upon thinking I knew best back then, I didn't seek answers outside myself and only relied on my limiting knowledge to self-actualize, birthed from need.

A certain confluence of fact and circumstance, awareness and self-confidence, self-improvement and remaining teachable, and acceptance and courage, saved me from my blinders of personal experience, and allowed me to be a more highly evolved person than I've ever known myself to be.

Works Cited

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