

Guess What, Some People are Pricks

I think we do humanity a disservice when we harp on specific prickish behaviors like racism and sexism. Suddenly, we look for them everywhere and even go so far as to develop a prejudice against entire groups on the basis that they either historically or currently, in large numbers, engage in these behaviors.

We start placing more and more people, by virtue of a shared characteristic, into the category of “the other.” We become what we’ve been lamenting, racist and sexist.

Instead, how about we stop harping on these specific behaviors and recognize that some people are just pricks. Does it really matter what form their prickness takes? Does it matter what they are thinking about their behavior while they engage in it?

That’s really what separates a racist from a prick though, right? A racist refuses to trade with a person of another race because he deems them inferior and unworthy of his consideration. Whereas a prick refuses to trade with a person because he knows they’re in a bind and revels in their struggle (or some such other prick reason to avoid the trade). At the end of the day, the racist and the prick are both pricks.

Why is each being a prick? Most likely they were taught that way, quite possibly with a bit of trauma. Nobody’s born a prick, I don’t believe, so if one’s constantly acting like a prick, they have some issues to work out. I don’t think the specific reasons matter all that much.

On the other hand, when we identify the racist, he or she is immediately categorized on that basis, race. And we think, he’s racist because of his race. But since we are enlightened we don’t believe that all members of his race are racist, but many likely are. We think a bit less of that specific race because we’ve identified prickness with skin color, not the person.

We haven’t reduced the amount of racism or sexism in the world. In fact, we’ve increased it by becoming ourselves a little bit more racist or sexist. What humanity needs if we are to become less bigoted overall is to call a prick a prick, and deal with pricks as individuals.

(My gratitude goes out to Aaron White, a good friend and fellow blogger here at EVC, for reshaping my thinking on this during our podcast recording.)