

Tolerance Is an Ugly Word



I DO NOT like the word tolerance. If you tolerate something, you do not like it very much.

I believe that what we have to do in this country is to stop disliking things and like them.

In the future the world is going to be tied together by airplanes and radio, and we are going to be near many people whom we have not had to know in the past. It is not going to be possible just to tolerate our neighbors. We are going to like them or they are not going to like us. Our neighbors are going to include people whose skins are yellow, brown, red, black and white. Their religions will be more varied than the color of their skins and our liking must come from understanding. Regardless of race or religion, human beings have certain things in common and we must discover that quickly.

We, in this country, are a highly mechanized people. We have inventive genius where machinery is concerned, and mechanical skills. Some of the things that we have accomplished seem nothing short of miracles to other people.

Other people understand things, however, which we know little about. Our boys who have been in India are coming back to tell us about snake charmers and the people who make flowers grow before your eyes. These are

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powers we know nothing about.

So we have things to learn from other people just as they have things to learn from us, but we are not going to learn if we just "tolerate" each other.

I have an idea that we are going to find some fundamental traits, such as kindness and integrity and love of children, are present in many human beings.

If we can do away with fear, we will begin to love. If we are not afraid of aggression among nations, either in the military sense or the economic sense, we may have peace. If we are not afraid of being dominated by those who are stronger than ourselves, then we will learn to like people and to cooperate with them.

First we must cease to be afraid of our neighbors at home and take the word "tolerance" out of our vocabulary and substitute for it the precept, live and let live, cooperate in work and play and like our neighbors. If we do this, we will soon find that our basic needs and desires are the same, and that given the same opportunities for development, we develop in much the same way.

The problem is not to learn tolerance of your neighbors, but to see that all alike have hope and opportunity and that the community as a whole moves forward.

