

Hey guys! My name is Lila Stratman, and I am a human being. By a show of hands, who here is a human being? Great, so being as we are in fact human beings, what does that mean we make up collectively? Humanity, we make up humanity, humans make up humanity. We as individuals make up the entirety of this incredibly advanced and diverse race. There are two key words there: Individual and diverse. According to this website called Google, (you probably haven't heard of it) an individual is defined as single. To elaborate, I'm not referring to the relationship status, rather a single being separate from a family, subculture, or "squad". You are an individual. I have my squad, you have your squad, the world is our squad, but the people who you associate with does not define who you are and shouldn't define who you are. The clothes you wear, the music that you listen to, the sports that you play, etc. are merely an extension of who you are. Needless to say, part of what makes you an individual are your likes, dislikes, interests, kindness or bitterness, decisions, and the list goes on. Can someone tell me something that makes them an individual? Only you can say who you are as an individual and this leads me on to my next point. We, as teenagers, are full of diversity and as we progress into high school, we will be surrounded by even more of it. Different individuals with different ideals, likes, dislikes, and overall personalities thrive on our progressing and potentially accepting society. In our adolescence, we look to define our identity. It's confusing, but also essential as we grow into adult intellectuals. Now that we are moving forward into a world of which people can exercise their self-expression and be open about who they are, something that can not be stressed enough is the importance of acceptance and expressing acceptance. As stated before, we all make up

humanity, we are humanity, and we share this world together. If your fellow man, woman, etc, deviates from your own personal values and belief sets, try not to look to your differences rather acknowledge their individuality and humanity as well as your own. If we were to stop with the unnecessary judging, discrimination, and disregard of our peers and instead express what we accept and what we enjoy, we can help to make a better tomorrow or even a better today. I guarantee you that within any given person here there is at least one thing that you have in common. That's the thing about us, we are so wonderfully different, yet underneath all of that complex individuality, we are in some way the same. All of you, everyone in this room and beyond, has 100% a right to their own opinions. You all took the constitution test, what's the first amendment? Opinions are just part of what makes you...well you. However, it's wrong to abuse that right to put someone or something down. Who here has had someone put them down? It's incredibly unfortunate and although nobody is perfect and we all make mistakes, collectively we have the power to help the progression of society, to spread understanding, and in doing so, flushing discriminatory hate down the...metaphorical drain. We, as a people, have the cognition to love each other, to appreciate each other.

We can be accepting.

We can be understanding.

We are intellectuals.

We are humanity.