

Empathy

By Luis Montealegre

Many, if not all, students have been victims of their own peers categorizing them into groups. Friendships have literally been demolished because of this stereotypical way students have of looking and hurting each other. I have seen many friendships go to waste because that one student isn't "cool" or he isn't "attractive" enough to the girls, and so forth. Walking down the hallways of an elementary school, a middle school, or a high school, and sometimes even a college, you can notice all of the groups. You notice everyone clumped into their own special groups such as the "Popular Group," the "Nerds," the "Jocks," the "Skaters," the "Loners," and the rest.

These students have been judged and put down, even bullied if you will, yet for what? Because some inconsiderate students label other students. Around 160,000 students miss school on average because of being bullied

(<http://www.parentingbookmark.com/pages/articleMB04.htm> by Michele Borba, Ed.D.). All students should take the time to put themselves in that one student's shoes and experience having their self-esteem shoved into the ground from being classified into groups. Students instantly judge another person's appearance such as his face, if he wears glasses, where he lives and grew up, or whatever the condition. We then rapidly catalog them into a group according to our paradigm. There are a lot of students that I first thought were different from me, but when I talked to them I found out that I was totally wrong.

Students also try to be in the "popular" group, which just leads to trouble. Students who fall into this "trap" may try to fit in by smoking, drinking, being a class clown, showing attitude, having sex, and so forth. What is the point? To fit in, to have confidence in yourself, to get some friends? We should look past this ridiculous phase. Even if you acquire friends, they are not real friends. Do you truly believe that a real friend would push you to engage in destructive behavior, or support it? That is not the crowd that you would want to fit in to. Getting into this group will ruin your future.

There shouldn't be groups at all because we are all alike in some manner. We all grew up in different circumstances which could change our outlook and

appearance. Does this honestly define who *we are*? Do we not all have feelings for one another? If we see a sad “nerd” can we not empathize for this student and the struggles he is going through? We can feel for a sad “popular” kid, so why not a nerd? At the end of the day we are all human and we need to look at each other equally.