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You will need to carefully read the selection below and complete various activities using the essay as your basis.

Using the highlight function on your computer, you will need to mark the essay below. It will be necessary for you to read the essay several times to fully understand the essay and complete the markings in such a way that demonstrates a close reading of the essay. You will need to use the following chart to correctly mark the essay.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Highlight Color | Item to be identified | Use an X to indicate you have accomplished this task. Use NA if this task did not apply to this essay. |
| PINK | Mark the main idea of the essay. |  |
| AQUA | Mark key examples/ support for the main idea/ theme of the essay. |  |
| GREEN | Mark statements that you agree with . |  |
| YELLOW | Mark statements that are new to you or make you think in a new way. |  |
| RED | Mark statements in the essay that you disagree with. |  |
| GRAY | Mark terms/ concepts that you found difficult to understand. |  |

The time I began reading and marking this assignment was:

I am an American Muslim. I believe in pluralism. In the Holy Quran, God tells us, “I created you into diverse nations and tribes that you may come to know one another.” I believe America is humanity’s best opportunity to make God’s wish that we come to know one another a reality.

In my office hangs Norman Rockwell’s illustration Freedom of Worship. A Muslim holding a Quran in his hands stands near a Catholic woman fingering her rosary. Other figures have their hands folded in prayer and their eyes filled with piety. They stand shoulder-to-shoulder facing the same direction, comfortable with the presence of one another and yet apart. It is a vivid depiction of a group living in peace with its diversity, yet not exploring it.

We live in a world where the forces that seek to divide us are strong. To overcome them, we must do more than simply stand next to one another in silence.

I attended high school in the western suburbs of Chicago. The group I ate lunch with included a Jew, a Mormon, a Hindu, a Catholic and a Lutheran. We were all devout to a degree, but we almost never talked about religion. Somebody would announce at the table that they couldn’t eat a certain kind of food, or any food at all, for a period of time. We all knew religion hovered behind this, but nobody ever offered any explanation deeper than “my mom said,” and nobody ever asked for one.

A few years after we graduated, my Jewish friend from the lunchroom reminded me of an experience we both wish had never happened. A group of thugs in our high school had taken to scrawling anti-Semitic slurs on classroom desks and shouting them in the hallway. I did not confront them. I did not comfort my Jewish friend. Instead I averted my eyes from their bigotry, and I avoided my friend because I couldn’t stand to face him.

My friend told me he feared coming to school those days, and he felt abandoned as he watched his close friends do nothing. Hearing him tell me of his suffering and my complicity is the single most humiliating experience of my life.

My friend needed more than my silent presence at the lunch table. I realize now that to believe in pluralism means I need the courage to act on it. Action is what separates a belief from an opinion. Beliefs are imprinted through actions.

In the words of the great American poet Gwendolyn Brooks: “We are each other’s business; we are each other’s harvest; we are each other’s magnitude and bond.”

I cannot go back in time and take away the suffering of my Jewish friend, but through action I can prevent it from happening to others.

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| --- | --- |
| Your response should be self-contained. When someone reads your responses, they should be able to tell which question you are responding to.  In marking the essay you should be clear in what idea and item you are reacting to. The markings should indicate a close and personal reading of the essay. Excessive markings or lack of markings may indicate a failure to have closely read and comprehended the essay. |  |
| Based on your reading and marking of the essay identify the main idea of the essay as well as support including direct quotations and evidence from the essay. Your response should be limited to no more than one (1) well written and adequately edited paragraph. |  |
| Using at least two (2) of the writing prompts below and in no more than three (3) well written and adequately edited paragraphs create a response to the essay:   * The part (s) of the essay I agreed with were * The part (s) of the essay I disagreed with were * This essay reminded me of/ made me think of * This essay made me think in a new way * This essay was similar to another essay |  |
| What question (s) would you like to ask the author of this essay? Explain your reasoning for wanting to have the answer to this question. |  |
| Having now read this essay I… |  |
| **Presenters Only:** You will need to have three (3) questions that you would like to present to your classmates during your seminar. |  |

The time I completed reading and marking this assignment was: