

2019 Love All Means All Essay Contest

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Age: 18

Grade: 12

Country or U.S. State: Ohio

### **Section 1: Describe how and why you flourish when you live by the Deep Golden Rule**

It is estimated that the average adult makes approximately 35,000 decisions each day (Graff). Regardless of the size of the decision, each choice has the potential to be good or bad. Many times, the bad decision is the easier one to make, not because we enjoy hurting others, but because it helps us to fit in, or it is more convenient for us. This is why it is so important that we live by the Deep Golden Rule. If everyone participated in living out the Deep Golden Rule, then the right decision would become the easier one to make because it would become a part of our culture. We would no longer try to fit in by making bad decisions, but rather through our generosity and service to others. Living in a world in which the selfless decisions became the popular options would mean creating an environment that is inclusive, accepting, and a place where each person has the opportunity to thrive.

Culture is what a society collectively believes to be right. However, what we *say* is right and the way that we act do not always look the same way. This is the problem with culture. Culture is formed not through words, but more importantly through actions. Take for example speeding. We say that speeding is wrong, and everyone knows that you shouldn't do it. However, because so many people drive 5-10 mph over the speed limit it has become a normalized behavior. Although we know that speeding is wrong, going 5-10 mph over is no longer *that* bad because everyone does it.

Living by the Deep Golden Rule is similar to speeding. When we are young we are taught that we should treat others the way that we wish to be treated. We know that it is the right thing to do, but we do not adhere to this rule despite what we say. We come across situations everyday in which living by the Deep Golden Rule means standing out from the crowd, or putting ourselves in an uncomfortable or inconvenient position. However, we cannot allow bad decisions to become normalized like they are in the speeding example. If we collectively make an effort to live by the Deep Golden Rule, then that will become a part of our culture. As a society, we will begin to see more and more people acting for others because it will have become the “normal” thing to do.

Although living by the Deep Golden Rule can be a challenge it is important that we persist. Even when it feels that we are the only one living by these standards, our actions have an impact. The Deep Golden Rule is contagious. By spreading our love and positive culture to others we make it easier for them to make the right decisions and live by the Deep Golden Rule in their lives. The only way to form a culture that makes it simple to accept and appreciate the differences of others is to make decisions that are empowered by the Deep Golden Rule. In doing this, we will create the ideal sense of community and an environment that will allow each individual to flourish.

**Section 2: Focus in on one of the seven core big questions, selecting one that seems fit for you**

Mahatma Gandhi once said “In a gentle way, you can shake the world.” This quote perfectly describes the way that I view love. I believe that true love and service is about more than a grand action. It is about the simple works that we perform to change the world for others,

even when they do not realize it. In my junior year, I had the opportunity to volunteer with a crisis nursery in Cleveland. By creating a lesson plan for the children there, I helped to heal and relieve their anxieties by adding consistency to their lives.

Having gone to a Catholic school for my entire life, theology class had always meant learning about my faith and studying the teachings in the bible. This perception changed during my junior year when I was assigned a year long project called the Agape Experiment. This project was unlike anything I had been assigned before. The instructions were simply “Find something that you are passionate about, and use your love to make a difference.” At first, I really struggled with this. It seemed so vague and I had no idea what I should do. As my classmates got to work organizing fundraisers and advocating for various local charities, I spent many class periods feeling overwhelmed and like I had nothing to give. However, as I looked further into my talents, and the things that I am passionate about, I realized that I wanted to do something to help children in my community.

This passion led me to an organization called Providence House. Providence House is a crisis nursery located in Cleveland. The goal of Providence House is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children who are facing crisis at home. Providence House takes children out of situations in which abuse or neglect could occur. They then have programs to help rehabilitate the parents and reunify them with their children.

Upon meeting with the activities coordinator, I found that I could not meet with the children due to my age. This forced me to think more about how I could make a difference behind the scenes. It then occurred to me that the children were experiencing drastic changes in only a short amount of time. In a matter of weeks, the children were taken out of their homes and

put into a new environment with new people and new expectations. What the children needed was a consistent schedule and things to look forward to.

For the remainder of my Agape Experiment, I spent my time working with Providence House to develop a lesson plan that could be followed each week for the kids. I made a schedule that laid out the books that would be read to the children, the daily snacks, crafts, and activities, as well as the weekly field trips.

My lesson plans became a part of their curriculum, and is now in yearly rotation. By creating a schedule, and introducing consistency into the lives of the children at Providence House, I helped to heal them in their times of crisis.

My work with Providence house taught me a lot about what love means to me. It showed me that my love can fuel actions that have the power to heal others and to soothe them of their anxieties. Through my act of service I shook the world for those children and learned what true love means to me.

### **Works Cited:**

Graff, Frank. "How Many Daily Decisions Do We Make?" *UNC*, 7 Feb. 2018,  
[science.unctv.org/content/reportersblog/choices](http://science.unctv.org/content/reportersblog/choices).

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