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Not Afraid

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety,” these are the words of Benjamin Franklin, a prominent voice of the past. The world took a turn into an entirely new future with the start of the 21st century. Our economies, governments and civilizations have evolved from the foraging lifestyles of small nomadic groups to the booming advanced society we live in today, but did we leave something behind along the way? Many people question the existence of key human values in our modern-day communities, and frequently, the absence of integrity is at the top of the list. The meaning of integrity can be seen in events, music, and movies of the present. All three exhibit that integrity is doing what one believes is right, no matter what.

The citizens of Tibet face a dilemma everyday of their lives. They want to become their own country, free from China, but China is vehemently opposed to this idea and refuses to allow the separation. Tibet would have to fight for its freedom if it ever wants to be free. However, the majority of the population in Tibet is Buddhist, a religion that reveres peace and avoids all forms of violence. These people believe so strongly in their customs of peace that they refuse to take up arms, or fight to gain what they want. Their steadfast standing in this issue shows that integrity is staying true to one’s beliefs of what is right even if it means not being able to get or do something one would wish one could.

The music of present-day culture reflects the thoughts of today. In Eminem’s song “Not Afraid,” he says, “I’m not afraid, to take a stand, Imma’ be what I set out to be, without a doubt undoubtedly.” The message of his song is that he will not give up on what he believes, no one can stop him from doing what he thinks is right, and he is not afraid to do anything. Many people do not do what they believe is right because they are afraid that other people will not approve. To have true integrity, one must surpass one’s fear and just do it.

James Cameron’s *Avatar* brought the consequences of many human customs to attention, but the overall moral message of his story was the importance of, and need for integrity. In the movie, a marine named Jake goes to another planet where humans are attempting to mine a valuable mineral despite the protests of the native inhabitants, the Na’vi. He develops a unique relationship with the Na’vi, and his commander orders him to pass on information that will be valuable in the case of a war. As Jake learns more about the Na’vi, he slowly comes to the realization that what the humans are doing to the planet and its inhabitants is wrong. In the end, he fights against the very man he had been working with previously in order to protect what he believes to be right, even when he is accused of betraying his own people. Jake’s actions show the true meaning of integrity through his determination to stand up for what he believes no matter what.

True integrity is difficult to find these days; especially as the social society has come to hold a more and more influential part of our lives through magazines, television, and newspapers

making what other people think a more substantial part of everyone's actions. As one can see from the determination of the Tibet citizens, the song of a rap artist, and a movie of one man's adventures to a new land, the meaning of integrity today is doing what one knows is right, despite the fear, the consequences, the opinions of others. Despite anything.

Work Cited

Eminem *Not Afraid*. Eminem. Aftermath Records, 2010. MP3