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Hate is everywhere in present day society. It's around the corner, down the street, and even at school, work or other public buildings. It's the worst mistake humanity has made, and every person on this earth is responsible. We can let it pass us by, or do something about it. I have experienced intolerance, responded, and chosen a path to help rid society of discrimination.

"African booty scratcher," one boy chanted. Suddenly, the chant began to spread. Children at our class lunch table shouted, "African booty scratcher! African booty scratcher!" They were talking to me. The school cafeteria was warm and humid, and the temperature rose because of the screaming. Clutching a lunch tray in hand and holding back tears, I moved around the table looking for a place to sit. I laid eyes upon an open seat and walked toward it. Without warning, I was barred from sitting down. A girl glanced at me and said, "You can't sit here, African booty scratcher. You stink like hot garbage too." She announced. My eyes began to water. I marched over to the end of the table, trying my best to keep my head up. Giggles erupted the moment I sat down.

I was disturbed at the fact that they picked on me because of my nationality. What was so wrong with being African? What was wrong with being a Nigerian? The first emotions I felt were sadness and self-pity. Is this somehow my fault? Why can't they respect me? Questions like these raced through my mind. I tried to not cry, but the attempt was useless. Feelings of sadness were replaced with those of anger and contempt. I was infuriated that the lunch aides did nothing to put a stop to it and at the other kids for disrespecting me. Most of all, I was mad at myself for not putting a stop to it. I sat there, taking the "punishment" for being who I was.

To stop hatred toward my self, I could face the confrontations I am up against. The days of crying and allowing the intolerance to continue are over. I must face the issue at hand and resolve it. This goal could be achieved by confronting the tormentor in a non-violent way, since violence is not the answer. To stop intolerance toward other people, I must start with myself, too. Since we all play some role in it, I could abstain from judging people before I get a chance to know them. Furthermore, I could stop judging by getting to know the person better. Doing these things could show other people how to handle their problems and allow others to get to know me better.

Recollecting an experience, expressing feelings, and committing to a plan can help rid the community of this ambiguous problem. Since we appreciate the community, it's our duty to fix it. By formulating these steps, we can work together to make a better environment for everyone who inhabits it.