



ELIZABETH YE is a sixth grader at Orchard Middle School in Solon. She plays chess, likes to draw and sing and her favorite subject is language arts. Elizabeth speaks Chinese and hopes to become an art teacher or perhaps a dentist.

A worksheet. It all started with a simple worksheet. My class was working on a math worksheet, and we were supposed to solve the problems with our table group. I respect my classmates very much. We help each other learn.

A dark girl with dark braids picked up her pencil and started writing. She seemed angry for some reason. "Nicole*," I said uncertainly. "We're supposed to work together, remember?" She didn't answer. Her whole face looked tight and stiff. She seemed to have a bad attitude. My other table members and I looked at each other and shrugged.

"Well, let's work together!" I said nervously to the others. "Since...umm..." I took a quick look at Nicole. Her head was bent down and her pencil was scratching the paper. She didn't seem to hear or see me. "I don't think...she's going to work with us...so--"

Suddenly, out of nowhere, Nicole blurted out, "I'm not workin' with no flat-faced Asia girl!" I gasped. I covered my face. It didn't feel that flat to me.

Those words stung. No one had ever called me a "flat-faced Asia girl" before. I wasn't even sure what that insult meant. I had always loved my Chinese culture, cherished it. I felt blazing hot fury towards Nicole, but I decided not to show it. I decided to stop the hate instead of returning it. I took a deep breath, "Nicole, would you want me to say something like that to you?"

"Flat-face," she muttered, still refusing to look at me. I ignored her. Then the rest of us started working on it together. Finally, even Nicole joined us. She didn't smile but at least she looked at me and spoke to me. She never called me that name again.

Stopping hatred is not a one-time thing. You'll have to slow it down first. It might move slower when a hater has to pause and put herself in the other person's place.

You can stand up for yourself without hating back. Self-respect helps others respect you.

** Name has been changed*