Life Lessons from a Do-Rag

"Get that crap off your head!" a friend commanded me as I innocently walked back from the cafeteria to my room in Maplewood. Now I've had crap on my head before – believe me, I know what it's like (I've got fall while milk- ing cows a cow pooped on me), but I am pretty sure that crap is not presently the substance on my head. However, since the item on my head was apparently uncharacteristic for me, my friend deemed "crap" a suitable term to describe the white bandana tied on my head.

The first day I wore a bandana on my head here at EMU, people's reactions surprised, baffled and challenged me.

Various people wondered: "What is the significance of the bandana?" "What the crap is that – why the do-rag?" "What's with that thing on your head?" and the most comical: "Have you become a Tampa Bay Buccaneers fan?!"

Frankly, there was no significance to wearing a bandana (especially on my head). I was actually going for the "I feel like putting a bandana on my head" look. I'm not writing about my "do-rag look" to criticize the responses of others. I write because it challenged me and I hope that hopefully challenge others.

I have been and am still guilty of the very thing I am criticizing: putting people into categories because of their appearances. One morning when I was 14 and eating breakfast, my older brother and one of his friends came down to eat. When his friend, whom I had never met before, walked into the dining room, I thought, "What is Ryan doing being friends with this punk?"

The guy had several earrings in each of his ears and some visible tattoos. Not only did I think he was a punk or wanna-be hard-core person, but he intimidated me as well. It turns out this fellow was Russ Pyle, whose company I now appreciate and enjoy immensely.

Why is it that I had no respect for him when I first met him? Was I that shallow to dismiss his value as a human being merely because of jewelry and body art? Sadly, yes. Many, if not all, of us are still guilty of the same thing. It could be a Marilyn Manson t-shirt, American Eagle shirt and khakis, or pants that sag down below the rear that for some reason cause us to immediately stereotype others. Do any of the previous attires make one Joe different from another?

Speaking of Joes, if Joe Lapp wore sweatpants to chapel, would that change him from being the formal President Lapp we all know to Sloppy Joe? Of course not, but simply understanding such simple truths is not enough.

The Lord looks at the heart and not the outward appearance, according to I Samuel 16:7. Similarly, we need to give people a chance even if their appearance vary drastically from ours – even if they uncharacteristically sport do-rags on their heads.

To the Weather Vane:

Everyone knows what the hot topics are here on campus. We've had numerous articles and discussions about them - homosexuality, academic freedom, etc. To be honest, I'm getting tired of it. There comes a point when both sides are heard and all the arguments are argued. At this point, people are not going to sway people's minds because they already formed their beliefs. We have reached that point. More and more I've come to notice what I call "complacent Christianity." People say they are Christians and they go through the motions of going to church, but there is no desire to know God in a deeper way. They are fake; they claim to love God but their actions don't show that. Complacent Christians are comfortable where they are, and they essentially resist God because our God is an uncomfortable God. They don't want to be challenged or refined by His fire; God wants to shape us and mold us to be more like Him, but that's scary and painful and hard. It's easy to notice this because I experienced it last semester. I thought it would be easy to stay on fire for God at a Christian school, but it wasn't. I found myself falling into a rut of motions. I became distracted by everything else going on around me that I lost sight of God. I don't want this campus to get caught up in the "everything else." Sometimes complacent Christians use issues to deflect attention off their own spiritual state. I am not saying that is the motive behind all the articles and such. I just want to use this as a caution to the community as a whole. I don't want everyone to get so wrapped up in issues that they neglect or forget the heart of the matter. We need to remember that the most important thing is our relationship with God. Are we actively striving to know God better, to be more obedient, to be more faithful in prayer, to trust Him more? Do we love God with all of our hearts, so much that we hunger for Him? That is the issue.

Rodney Umbel

The Weather Vane

Wants YOU!

Needed:
photographers & writers

Work-Study available.

-Hugs & Slugs-

A slug to the the Snack Shoppe decision to stop serving breakfast after 11 am. How will we satisfy our all-day cravings for bacon, egg, and cheese sandwiches now?

A short-sleeved hug to the unseasonably balmy weather last week. We've decided glob-al warming won't be so bad if it means we can wear shorts in Jan.

A how-did-you-not-see-it slug to the driver of the car that ran over the Martin house cat last week.

Foot in Mouth

"I wouldn't have a problem with hitting someone over the head with a baseball bat!"

Ted Grimsrud
History and Philosophy of Nonviolence

Have a contribution? Send it to vane@emu.edu along with the professor's name and class.

Letter to the Editors

Complacent Christianity

To the Weather Vane:

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Jessica J. Wilson