

Listen, Watch and Speak Up

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Today, I want to talk about racism and I want to tell you about a song. It's an American song called "I'm not racist". Most of you here probably have not heard it, but I think it's worth listening to the song and watching the video. It's shocking but it's illuminating and even if you have not thought about racism deeply, this song will make you think about it. You know what, we need to be shocked because although people are trying hard to get rid of racism and discrimination, they're not going away. Looking at the world, it seems they are getting worse.

Let me describe the song and the video for you. It takes place in a large but simple room and there's nothing in it but a round table and two chairs. There are only two people in the video: two guys, one is black and one is white. The white actor, who is wearing a Make America Great Again hat, sings the first verse. He criticizes how black people act, what they wear, and how they live but all the while insisting he's not racist. Once he finishes rapping, the black guy starts his verse, and he quickly says that he doesn't like whites. He claims white people can't understand how black people feel and that whites can't imagine what's it like not knowing if you will die after being stopped by police.

Now, if you only listen to the rappers words and see their aggressiveness you will probably think they are racist stereotypes. But if you pay close attention you will see they are more complex than that. First, both of the rappers listen intently to one another. At one point, the black rapper provokes the white rapper by swatting his hat off, yet the white rapper doesn't respond. He just continues to listen. In fact, just before this he even says he wishes he knew the black guys culture better. That doesn't sound like the words of a racist. Believe it or not, at the end their verses, they actually hug.

I felt a little bit confused that after all the screaming, the aggression and the racism, these two guys hug it out. I was like that's how they end this? But maybe we need to have some rough conversations, come to some understandings and find some respect for each other. And then hug out our differences. People today don't do that enough. We tend to just point at someone and say we don't like them, because they're wrong or different, and we're right. It's a very easy thing to do, but it doesn't change anything. What this song and this video show us is even when you're mad because people don't agree with you, you need to listen to them until they finish telling you what they think. You need to have courage to listen like that and try to understand somebody who is different from you. We say we should do this all the time, but we are not practicing what we say.

This song shows how just how touchy racism is. Even people who say they are not racist can be racist, and we can be offended by someone's words so easily. I understand some people don't feel comfortable talking about racism. However I think we should. Not talking about doesn't mean racism goes away. It festers. We will never know what others think, and we won't understand we we think ourselves, until we talk with others, listen to others; try to understand others. So speak up, no matter what you think.