

2017 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

Nature: The Greatest Teacher

(Original)

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On the event, a small, mindless child decides to throw stones and twigs at a fruit-bearing tree, what would that tree do? Would it be able to retaliate? Refuse to bear fruit? It decides to give to this child, the cream of its crop, the best of its fruit. While the child, then runs away with his arms full of the fruit he had just received, he doesn't think much of what he had just witnessed. A lesson to be learned. In this same way, we witness nature providing us with everything we would need, yet we don't appreciate it, or understand it as well. You see, while this child had gotten the fruit, he neglected to learn that when negativity, and the worst parts of life are thrown at you, you should throw your best back. Of course, mankind tends to have an oversized ego, whereas we believe there is nothing we have learned from something as insignificant as nature. In truth, we are the ones that are an insignificant part of an infinitely large, expanding universe, with trillions of light years of distance, and a countless number of stars. Nature doesn't only provide us with the resources that we exploit and waste, it offers us lessons of purpose and balance.

Nature has given everything a purpose, or more importantly, nothing is insignificant. We should respect everything around us, as nature has done with creating the smallest insects, to the largest carnivores. They each have their own reason for existing, either to help some creatures or preserve the lives of others. Although, we, as humans, believe that if any creature doesn't directly benefit us, they are completely inadequate. I myself believed this statement until I realized something truly remarkable. While studying the food chain, I discovered ants, considering how small they are, decompose and "cleanse" nature, providing food for a vast number of other creatures. They provide important nutrients to the soil, allowing growth and sustenance for others. We all can learn from this event, that if we ever consider ourselves to be small or weak, we should consider that very ant. Another example would be bullies. These mean-spirited people, with seemingly no other reason to live other than bother us actually make us stronger.

Balance is one of the most basic foundations on which we stand. We fail to realize there

is an important system for everything. This stems from the idea that every living creature has a purpose. Nature has a fragile balance that needs to be preserved, or else it would fall quickly. One small change will destroy the basis of that foundation toppling everything that was done. Our system works in the same way. If we would make that one, damaging change, everything we built would surely fall. Reminding us that, while we accomplished so much, we are very much prone to making a mistake that could potentially reverse everything. Take in case a while ago, nearly half a century, wolves were hunted to near extinction at Yellowstone National Park to allow the elk population to grow. Over 130 wolves were killed, so soon Yellowstone was devoid of these canines. The elk population did indeed grow, and it spiraled out of control. The same happened with other herbivores.

Birds and beavers disappeared. With the trees gone, beavers had nothing to make their homes with. The dams created by the beavers were home to reptiles, birds, amphibians and other mammals, which left when the beaver had gone as well. Yellowstone was reduced to near nothing. Coyotes became the top predator, and they destroyed mice and rabbit populations, causing hawks, eagles, foxes, weasels, and badgers to disappear. Bears, which scavenged after wolf kills, had left, when the berries they ate were gone too. The system created had been nearly destroyed because of the removal of one creature. Likewise, we can learn from this mistake that everything is a part of this system. This example would teach us the valuable lesson of preserving our system, and enforcing the value of purpose. The generations that may come after us will be sure to keep these important lessons in mind in order to strengthen us and help us improve further.