Name: Justin Liang

Blurred Line

Black and white were the only two colors that the world worked around with. These platonic words have always been hovering in my mind. But, while growing up, I came to a realization that the world isn’t just black or white, left or right, and day or night. More often, we’re left on the brink of shades. It’s just that we’re drowned in this pit of uncertainty that no one questions about. And? We’re forced to make choices in this mad world where options in reach are all on the ground while the real answers are in the stars. Unfortunately, I’ve been through a similar thing growing up, fortunately, I’ve learned my lesson and moved on.

Here’s my story. I can never forget the English class that I had in middle school. We were to do Model United Nations scripts. Then my teacher instructed us to use numerical codes to make our scripts. Since I wanted to make my codes unique, I raised my question to her, “Can I put anything?”. She replied without hesitation, “Yes”. Hence with my naive little mind, me and my classmate decided to have a little fun of it, and we eventually settled down with the number of 69. The teacher has nothing to do with us putting “69” as our code, we didn’t put it down to insult our teacher, but rather a little inside joke between me and my friend.

When the session ended, every pair in the class handed the scripts to the teacher, and we were dismissed. Me and my partner went to our next class thinking the number we chose was nothing big, but we were wrong... Surprisingly, I got called by the leader of the academic group into the office wanting to have a little so-called teatime with me. I was confused because I didn’t relate what I’d done in English class with offensive actions. While waiting for the teacher to come and talk to me, the leader who brought me into the room told me she had just dealt with a similar thing with a grade 6 student. She said to me that the grade six student was reasonable, regarding the fact that he is still young, and dumb, but what me and my partner did was unreasonable. Till then, I realized me and my partner got called into the office was because our 69 inside joke got too far.

In the middle of the class, me and my partner got called in asking us tons of questions on why we did that inappropriate joke on our teacher, saying it was offensive and rude. Even though we repeatedly stated our intention had nothing to do with our teacher, not to offend her, the 69 thing was supposed to just be an inside joke. But the admins and leaders joining us in the meeting have still given us “unerasable” level one warning letters each, wanting us to learn the lesson. At the very same day, me and my partner went to find our English teacher to apologize for our immature and childish behaviors, and has learned our lesson the hard way.

This whole drama exemplified a renowned quote by Marilyn Monroe, stating that “I don’t mind making jokes, but I don’t want to look like one”. Me and my partner were originally only using that number to make jokes to each other but were too careless to erase it before submission and change it into a “normal” code. Our jokes to each other have made us the joke. I still regret what I did in that English class, but I've emerged from that naive incident and have concluded that it's a societal phenomenon for people not to state their intentions clearly and give out vague options. Even though the English teacher said we could write any combination of numerical symbols as our script’s code, but we chose the one that is forbidden to even mention. This got me thinking about why people can’t just lay out all the rules and play along. Why can’t they play within the boundaries and want us to work in the blurred line where the crosswalk is right there?