

John Berner

Multiculturalism

Event 4 – Former Neo-Nazi

On February 27, I went to go see T. J. Leyden at the Menomonie High School auditorium. He was a very graphic speaker as forewarned he would be to get his message across. A guy like this proves that it isn't in our nature to be cruel, but rather a guided and learned trait. He said that he used to teach those who were vulnerable to develop hate. This power to persuade was learned by being in the military. All it takes is to get a message buried into one's head that people of a certain race, culture, or religion can interfere with his/her space and rights, causing he/she to be less productive with his/her life.

T. J. was cruel both physically and emotionally to his friends and community, but when he started seeing what impact his life had on his family, his thoughts started to change, and he started to seek help. T. J.'s brother was almost killed, and his kids were becoming villains before they outgrew Mr. Rogers.

T. J. started protesting against everything he stood for in previous years for the Simon Weisenthal Center, which his mom encouraged him to do. He even gave up his marriage to become a better person.

I think that he is on the right road with the right message. Hopefully, we will be able rid ethnic and cultural hatred from our world. As far as the way he presents his material, I think he was successful in scaring a handful away from those attitudes and beliefs. I don't think he succeeded, although not his fault, in keeping kids away from the bad music and symbols. He had a good point about the effects of them, but it is our world's duty to take a stand against hate materials. I did learn a great deal, and that is how people develop the morals that they have.