Prejudice in the Workplace

Derick Bell

Colorado Technical University

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Prejudice has been a problem since the beginning of time. No one is comfortable with anyone else that is different than they are. There are said about the individuals who do not display the same features or come from the same area as the rest of the group. Getting to know other people will eliminate so much animosity, but not everyone is willing to step outside of their comfort zone. The definition of prejudice is the unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, regarding an ethnic, racial, social, or religious group. (Dictionary.Com) From this definition you will get a general understanding of why prejudice is so bad when it is in the workplace. The work environment should be peaceful and without stress. The prejudice that is displayed toward an individual can come from management, coworkers and depending on the job, like the one I will tell you about, it can come from the customers. At one point in time I was a tire technician at Sam’s Club. Well there was this one time when I had surgery for Crohn’s Disease. I was still in pain and I also had a doctor’s note that allowed me to return to work with some restrictions. The manager approved my return and the assistant, but it was my temporary supervisor who had the problem with it. I was a young African American man, who mind you is far from lazy, and he was an older Caucasian man. Well he decided that he want me to do a job that would cause me to have to bend over for a long period. This would not be possible because I had staples going down the length of my abdomen from the surgery. When he finished describing to me what it was that he wanted me to do, I informed him that it would not be easy for me to accomplish and it could cause me to end up back in the hospital if one of my staples came loose. Explaining this to him only caused him to get extremely angry with me. Right then on the spot he told me that I was fired. Well to me his brash decision was unacceptable. I was angry, but young so the first thing that I did was went home. Once there I waited for my mother to get there so that I could talk to her and let her know of the situation that happened at work. My mother informed me that I should have gone straight to the assistant manager and lodged my complaint with him. She let me know that it was not too late and she coached me on what to do and to make sure that I was respectful no matter what was said to me. Just because others are nasty and disrespectful towards you, that is not how you should act. My mother told me that it may not have everything to do with my race, but also my age. I was only 19 years old at the time. Not completely inexperienced because it wasn’t my first job, but in matters of discrimination and prejudice I was.

The next day I went back to Sam’s Club to state my case to the department manager. Well the section and department that I was working at during my restriction period was different than where I normally worked. I worked in the tire and lube normally, but was working in grocery during the restriction. Well the department manager in grocery told me that the supervisor stated that I was being insubordinate and disrespectful so he asked me to leave. I explained to him that I was explaining to the supervisor about my restrictions and the task that he was giving to me would not be good for me to do. Well the department manager did not want to hear what I was trying to say. He sided with the supervisor. At this point I was outraged, but I remained calm and left. The next day I went to look for my normal department manager, she had gone on vacation. I stayed away until the following week and when I knew that she was back from vacation I approached her and informed her of the situation that occurred and how I had been fired. At this point she became upset and let me know that she would take care of everything. It took her a couple of weeks to get anywhere with speaking to the right people and in the meantime, I was hired on somewhere else. Once she got through the process, she told me that the supervisor who fired me was on thin ice, because I was not the only person that he had harassed, once they received my complaint they started and investigation and he was later fired. They told me that if I wanted my job back that I could come back to work at Sam’s Club. I decided against it, I didn’t want to be employed someplace where they chose not to listen to you and take what you are saying into consideration. I didn’t know it, but they sent me sort of a severance package. It was labeled as my stock and 401k. I did not ask to cash my stock in, and I didn’t ever sign up for the 401k. Yet both were sent to me a few months after all the investigations were completed.

The study that I chose has come from Michigan State University and it talks about the population of the United States of America. There are no participants besides the African American population of the U.S. Instruments that were used to measure this study was the surveys of the many qualified African Americans’ that were overlooked for promotions, and other types of unfair and unequal treatment that they endured in the workplace. The findings concluded that prejudice and discrimination in the workplace causes harm to the individuals who it is coming against. It causes psychological, emotional, and physical damage. This damage can be detrimental and undermine the individual to the point where some lose their motivation to be positively motivated workers for their company and some give up on their will to live all together. These feelings can be harmful to the entire population due to some of the things that it will cause. The biggest consequence is the crime rate will skyrocket and the number of African Americans imprisoned and unemployed will go up tremendously. Being prejudice should be a crime and in the coming weeks I plan to show why it is so harmful to the population. (Settles, Buchanan, Yap. 2010)

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