

Essay-Contest 2017/18

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Fremdsprachenerwerb: Muttersprachlerin

Isis Anchalee

For this essay, I chose Isis Anchalee, a computer engineer, because she is the founder of #ILookLikeAnEngineer, which was created to promote discussion of gender equality and diversity in the workplace.

It was founded because Isis received a lot of hateful feedback after her face was featured in an ad campaign for OneLogin. She believes that most people are "well intentioned but genuinely blind to a lot of things that those who do not identify as male have to deal with." After its launch, over 250,000 people used the hashtag and shared their experiences with diversity struggles and sexist behavior regarding their profession. As a feminist, I strongly believe in what she stands for. I figure if a woman wants to be an engineer, a mechanic or a construction worker, she should just go ahead and become one and not let the fact that certain jobs are seen as a man's profession in society stop her from doing what she loves. The same goes for men who are into makeup or fashion. One should never feel like one is not entitled to follow one's passion. Imagine people being told that they can not do or become something because of their ethnicity. Everyone would freak out. Now let us switch "ethnicity" with "gender". Nobody raises a red flag there. Kids are literally brought up like this; that is why it is socially acceptable. They do not really question the values their parents shared with them and then they pass them on to their own children. Pink is for girls. Blue is for boys. Girls play with dolls and love dressing up as Disney princesses. Boys want to be warriors and invincible superheroes. As they get older "You can not play with that because you are a girl" turns into "You can not work as this and that because you are a woman". Sexism does not disappear, it just morphs. And then, after all your hard work has paid off and you earn money by doing what you have always wanted to do, suddenly the next shocking thing is being told that you do not look like an engineer. Baffling that you can be both female and good at programming, I know. Men and women can do the exact same thing. We as a society are so obsessed with gender and what you should or should not do

based on that when, at the end of the day, it is just a biological condition and does not tell you anything about a person.

Isis Anchalee is a member of Women Who Code and has her own website called "www.ilooklikeanengineer.com", which is supposed to be a "safe platform for us all to continue to share our stories and experiences relating to diversity issues in tech." Twitter even threw a #iLookLikeAnEngineer event to kick off the Twitter Flight Developer Conference. In 2016, Isis was asked to speak on the main stage at the Grace Hopper Celebration in front of six thousand guests. Multiple people had reached out to Anchalee expressing that the #iLookLikeAnEngineer movement gave them the confidence that they needed to change careers and pursue learning how to code. #iLookLikeAnEngineer even made it into Google's Year in Search compilation. Emma Watson retweeted an article about female engineers fighting stereotypes in the tech industry Anchalee was featured in. Isis says that her favourite part about starting this successful movement is that she got to meet "some of the most amazing people" she has ever met in her life. Although this list "does not even come close to covering all of the wonderful facets of #iLookLikeAnEngineer", Isis is "endlessly grateful to have been able to be a voice in this conversation for those who feel that they need to sacrifice pieces of their identity to be treated with respect". She also mentions that some of the conversations she has had with people after speaking at events have "forever touched my heart".

Anchalee says that she will continue speaking up and "embodying the principle that anyone can be femme as fuck and still kick ass at what they do". I love her so much for saying that, and I think she is such an inspiring woman for educating people about topics no one really seems to be talking about. She is very successful at what she is doing and the responses were mostly positive, which is a step in the right direction. She probably did not change the world, but she made it a better place, encouraged people to follow their passion and think outside of the box. As ignorant as it may sound, I do not think there is a single negative outcome regarding this project. Of course there will always be people who hate on others no matter what they do and even if there is nothing to hate on. At the end of the day, if you boil down what feminism really represents and what Isis Anchalee stands up for, it is a truth. It is about freedom, equality and liberation. It is about time people realize that men and women

can do the same thing, some really have screwed up ideas of what someone is supposed to do or how someone is supposed to act or dress based solely on their sex. Besides empowering and encouraging other people to live the lives they want, Anchalee has really got people thinking and questioning their own or society's absurd, sexist stereotypes and behavior. Changing someone's point of view can be a good thing as well, and in this case it definitely is.

What Isis did is truly a heroic and fearless thing to do. Anchalee smashed stereotypes, educated people and encouraged them to do what their heart is invested in, no matter what anyone says. Even if "anyone" is society itself.

Sources:

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