

## **Living It; My Vision**

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*What does equity look like?*

I participated in a discussion that led me to think, we want equity, and we know *some* of the steps to achieving that, but what does that world look like? We are chasing a dream, finding our direction, but what is the end goal? What does success look like? When I first thought about this, I didn't have an answer. Not only did it take some reflection for me to find an answer, but in all of the conversations I've had around this topic, how is it we often talk about the steps needed, but rarely talk about what the end goal looks like.

Equity can mean many things, and it's important to define what it is we are trying to achieve. A vision of equity depends on the person, as experiences and identities shape what we perceive as needing to change and what barriers exist in our lives. As an individual, I can't say what will be the cumulative answer, but I have ideas based on my perspective.

An equitable world does not mean personal achievement will be *easy*, but it means we will all be fighting the *same* fight. Rather than the struggles that White Americans experience being significantly less than Black Americans, we will experience similar barriers or changes of direction. We will be on equal footing, so if two people of different identities are working toward the same goal, their journey will be more aligned. As we are all inherently different our journeys will never be identical, but there won't be drastic differences that can be traced back to systematic oppression that has created increased challenges for hundreds of years.

It could be said that an equitable world is one where we can all run to the top with ease, but that's not what I see as a vision of equity. Equity doesn't remove the challenge, it just removes the varying levels of intensity that one challenge may bring, especially those relating to one's identity. The goal isn't to make everything easily attainable, hard work is important and sets apart those who want it and are qualified from those who have fewer qualifications, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that system. But if you have to work ten times as hard to prove the same desire and qualifications, is that system still justifiable? We are leaving people out of opportunities because it is simply too intense of a challenge to meet expectations, and losing out on true progress by excluding those who can't make the moves.

**To me, an equitable world is one where ...**

There is no pay gap associated with race or gender, because why is pay based on identity and not qualifications?

Higher education gaps don't exist because every person will receive the appropriate amount of assistance, to allow them access to quality schooling/training.

Neighborhoods aren't inclusive of only one race, because why does skin color determine where we should live?

Everyone's access to healthcare looks the same, wait times don't vary based on the person, and everyone is respected when they express the pain they are experiencing.

We all have the opportunity to excel and live our dreams, and the only thing that would be able to stop that, is ourselves.

So what do others think, *what does an equitable world look like to you?*