

*Michael*  
**DONLEY**

## Simmering pot

*Race relations should be taught first in the home*

The most important issue on our campus and in this country right now is race relations. The cross-burning incident started the debate here. On top of that gem, in the last few weeks we have also had a black celebrity found liable by a mostly white jury, and another cross — this one found in the gas tank of a car belonging to a minority staff member at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's campus.

We all have midterms quickly approaching, so it's kind of difficult to take time out of our busy schedules to sit through a race relations seminar. But thanks to your friendly campus columnist this is no longer a problem. **RACISM IS WRONG.** End seminar.

I don't care what you use to justify your racism; the Bible, the way you were raised, your friends. If you are a racist you are wrong, plain and simple.

Part two of the argument — if you're a racist get out of MY country. The United States of America and our very own Generation X need people who are going to solve some of the problems we have inherited. Racism is the first hurdle we have to get over.

So what is the problem? Ignorance mostly. Not so long ago I was under the misguided assumption that everyone in America had sat down and thought about the problem of racism.

This illusion was shattered for me when a newscaster asked a juror in the O.J. civil trial if the perspective she brought to the case may have been colored by her background —



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she is white and grew up in a wealthy area of California. I expected a politically correct answer like: It is true that people view things differently depending on their life experience and views taught to them by their parents, but I think we gave O.J. a fair trial.

Instead she said, “Some people

are against interracial marriages, but I don't think it came up in our deliberations.” She hadn't even understood the question.

The newscaster tried a few more times to explain the question to her but it was pointless. I think a lot of us in the majority have the same problem. We assume that the stereotypes we learned growing up are reliable and we don't need to raise this ugly little question any longer.

We all need to challenge our beliefs on this issue. America is quickly moving toward a truly interracial society. Before the middle of next century whites will no longer be a majority and we need to find a way to put this behind us.

Luckily our society is also moving toward making education a major priority. Many people believe this will be the medicine to cure the disease of racism. I don't think that will be enough.

Let me tell you what will work. Every mother and father in this country — no matter what race they belong to — need to teach their children that people are people. Black, white, Asian — it doesn't matter.

If we are going to “live up to the true meaning of our creed” we have to take Mr. King's advice and judge people on the strength of their character not the color of their skin.

**Donley is a sophomore philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

*Jessica*  
**KENNEDY**

**24-7-365**

*Parents should prioritize children over careers*

For many women and men, having children means difficult choices. Choices that go way beyond choosing names and nursery decorations.

In a world where people want it all, one of the toughest issues is the decision whether to stay home or put a child in day care.

I feel strongly that if you're going to have children, you must commit yourself to their development. Translation: Someone needs to be home with the little ones.

Obviously, single parents don't have this luxury. But when circumstances permit, children of single parents should be left with a family member or in a one-on-one situation with a qualified caregiver.

Argue costs, argue career or argue convenience, I don't care. Because in the end, I'll argue the children's lives are at stake.

Recently, Time published an article about infant development that really hit home. I've always thought that it was important to have a parent stay home with newborns and toddlers, but after reading that article, I'm adamant.

The first few years of life (and those nine months in the womb) are absolutely critical in human development.

Nature has a lot to do with our potential, but more and more studies are showing that nurture has greater influence of what kind of person a child will grow up to be.

It's nothing new that children who are touched more usually grow up to be well-adjusted adults.

But studies are also showing that children who are read to, played with and talked to, in conjunction with physical contact, are happier, healthier and generally better people.



Children are a huge commitment. They require — and deserve — your best, without question.

That commitment requires a choice and unfortunately that choice usually comes down to career versus children — which makes sense. It's difficult to be your absolute best when there are multiple demands for your complete attention.

To help your children to develop positively, they need full parental attention. I don't care if it's mom or dad, but someone needs to stay home with the kids.

I'm not a sociologist or a psychologist, but I wonder, would we have as many problems with juveniles if more parents had stayed at home during those important first few years?

This doesn't mean giving up your life or your career. It does mean that you need to make your life fit the demands of a baby.

Staying at home doesn't mean you have to be a “housewife/househusband” or that you have to give up your career. It just means you find creative ways to stay active or involved.

If you want to give up your career for full-time parenthood, that's great. If you don't, find a career that's flexible and work around the family.

Women in my family have become free-lance writers and editors who work out of home offices. And my mom has always taught night classes so she could be home with us during the day and my dad was with us when she was teaching.

When I decide to have children, I plan on making my career fit their needs. With technological advances, it's only going to be easier to work out of the home.

I don't want to miss first words, first steps and all the little wondrous discoveries all babies make every day of their lives.

It's reassuring to see that Congress is responding to the changing needs of families by passing family-friendly legislation. I only hope that it continues the trend. I'd like to see it made easier for stay-at-home parents to get insurance and benefits.

If you're already a working parent, make the most of the time you do spend with your children. There's some horrifying statistic that on average, parents and children talk less than 10 minutes a day (or less)! That's wrong.

In a world where the future is growing more uncertain every day, your children deserve the best start they can get. That doesn't mean buying them whatever they want. It means that you need to give them your time and attention, without smothering them.

Staying at home with your children in their first few years of life is but a small sacrifice for the years of reward that are to come.

**Kennedy is a senior advertising and broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

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