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Non-Conformity Is Key

Robin Williams, a famous actor, once stated, "Conformity is the difficulty in maintaining your own beliefs in the face of others" (*Dead Poets Society*). People say that conformity is simply fitting in with society, when in reality it is a better idea to not conform for a number of reasons. Individuals should not conform to fit in with a group since there are the positive outcomes of happiness and demonstrating good character from this choice.

Those who choose to not conform often demonstrate good character and values, as seen in the characters Juror #8 and Atticus. In the play, *12 Angry Men*, Juror #8 explains his thoughts for choosing to not conform by stating, "There were eleven votes for guilty. It's not so easy for me to raise my hand and send a boy off to die without talking about it first" (Rose 5). Juror #8 votes for not guilty, and is the only juror that does so. He wishes to talk about it first and not convict the boy right away. By not conforming to the rest of the jury, Juror #8 shows moral excellence because he chose to listen as opposed to killing the defendant right away. Additionally, in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus explains to Scout why he is defending Tom Robinson, stating, "Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win" (Lee 101). Atticus believes that he must still try to win the Tom Robinson case because it is the right thing to do, even though it is highly unlikely that he will win. Atticus is demonstrating morality by

not conforming to the rest of Maycomb, who thinks that white lawyers do not have to show effort when defending a black man. **Moreover**, in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus tells Scout how to deal with the mean things people say to her about the Tom Robinson case, stating "You might hear some ugly talk about it at school, but do one thing for me if you will: you just hold your head high and keep those fists down" (Lee 101). **Atticus** gives Scout the advice to be the bigger person and to not engage in fights when someone says something ugly about the Tom Robinson case. Atticus is giving Scout advice to not conform to her classmates' childish racist remarks by not fighting back and not giving them the response they are looking for. Atticus's advice to Scout to not sink down to her classmates' level and not conform to their "usual disease" promotes good character. Therefore, people who choose to be non-conformists often exhibit high morals and ideals.

Individuals who do not conform are happy with their life, as evidenced by the characters Dolphus Raymond, Leonard Mead, and Leopard Man. In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, when Scout and Dill are talking with Dolphus Raymond, he explains to them "Secretly, Miss Finch, I'm not much of a drinker, but you see they could never, never understand that I live like I do because that's the way I want to live" (Lee 268). **Dolphus** Raymond pretends to be a heavy drinker because Maycomb residents could never understand why he lives with a black woman. Dolphus Raymond chooses to not conform to Maycomb's usually conservative ways by ruining his reputation and making it seem like he is drunk all the time, when really he is not. By doing this, Dolphus lives his life with his black wife happily and undisturbed. **Equally important**, in the short story "The Pedestrian", the text states, "To step over grassy seams and make your way, hands in pockets, through

the silences, that was what Mr. Leonard Mead most dearly loved to do" (Bradbury 1). Later on in the short story, when the police interrogate Mead, they ask, "Walking where? For what?" "Walking for air. Walking to see." (Bradbury 1). Mr. Leonard Mead loves to walk outside at night but the police approach him and interrogate him, questioning the way he lives. Although Mr. Mead chooses to not conform by walking outside at night, he lives happily because he loves to do it. Likewise, in the article, "Sociology of Leopard Man", Leopard Man states, "As far as I'm concerned, if there is a paradise on Earth, I'm in it. You're welcome to what you've got. I'll keep this." (Feys). Leopard Man lives his life happily, unlike conformists who follow along with society. Despite choosing to not conform by living in isolation with tattoos all over, Leopard Man enjoys his life and is happy. People who make the decision to not conform live their life happily.

People who choose to not conform reap the benefits of happiness and practicing good morals. As evidenced in *12 Angry Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Juror #8 and Atticus show morality and good values as a result of not conforming. In "The Pedestrian", "Sociology of Leopard Man", and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the characters all prove to be people who are living happily as a result of not conforming. Collectively, these characters demonstrate that non-conformity has major advantages and is an excellent idea.

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