

When President Kennedy made these remarks he was referring to a larger application than relationships between individuals. However, the wisdom would still apply person to person. To learn to appreciate differences is to learn how to appreciate oneself in relationship to other people. Our differences are what make us individuals; therefore their differences are what make them individuals. If we do not value this truth then we are destined to live a very lonely life while surrounded by people. The most “alone” there is, is to be lonely while with someone else. This sorry state of being exists because of a lack of true communication and an unwillingness to explore an opposing point of view. This is an exploration skill indeed, and can lead to valuable insight. To that end even the Holy Bible states:

“The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge. A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.” - Proverbs 18: 15, 16 – KJV

The point, of course is not to believe everything or nothing, but to explore what we believe and why. Then we will be well served to learn to communicate it clearly to others while respecting their right to differ with us. After all, there is not just one right way to do the right thing. Each person is given special gifts and the ability to bloom where he/she is planted (as the saying goes). So, let us each see if we can water our own garden while not producing a drought in other people's gardens. At least let us make our part of the world safe for diversity and learning.