

We Are the Same

Motivational speaker tells FHS students how to stop toxic loneliness ... and spread the love

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“Do you get a girlfriend or boyfriend in high school” is a question many students silently ask themselves – and often ask more than once. However, one person to ask this question out loud was Justin Flood. In fact, he asked his 8th-grade counselor.

Motivational speaker David Flood – Justin’s father – told embarrassing stories such as this one and others like it to the students of Fairfield High School during three recent assemblies in the Performing Arts Center.

The Fairfield student body learned more about Justin – who is now 20 years old, loves anime ... and is autistic – when his dad made a speech



Motivational speaker David Flood during an assembly with all Fairfield High School juniors on Nov. 28 in the Performing Arts Center, one of three such class assemblies that day.

about how being selfless will end loneliness. To make his point during his morning talk with the senior class, Flood called volunteer Ha’Jiere Pitts to the stage. Flood then said that that when he looks at Ha’Jiere, he sees himself.

At first, people laughed at this statement, because how can a 54-year-old white man see himself as a



Motivational speaker David Flood banters with junior volunteer Jhurne Amman during one of three school assemblies.

17-year-old African-American teen? They are on two opposite ends of a spectrum.

However, Flood explained, anyone can see a little piece of themselves in others – if only they just look *inside* a person, instead of only at the outside.

After this explanation, something seemed to finally click with the roughly 800 people crowded into that auditorium ... that everyone can see a potential Justin inside of themselves.

When Flood said, “Justin wants a girlfriend because he sees other boys with one,” many students could empathize with him. That, said Flood, is because when anyone looks at other people in love or having companionship – something that everyone desires – and know that they lack it, desolation creeps in and they lose hope, wondering if they’ll ever get a significant other of their own, just like Justin did. Flood said that this feeling of “loneliness is toxic” –

in any type of relationship in life – and can cause people to build up walls because they have tried every method possible to erase their loneliness and nothing has worked.

For example, when students see their peers sitting alone at the lunch table, they do not ask them if they would like to join them, because, said



Flood, they are “ignoring them as a result of social media causing the world to move at a faster pace, which, in the end, causes people to forget how to be kind to people.”

In order to keep these feelings and attitudes of isolation from flooding the hallways in which students at Fairfield High School walk, Flood advised them to do three things:

- **Stop looking** at people on the outside and look at them on the inside
- **Look a teacher** in the eye for 8.99 seconds (it rounds up to 9 seconds) and tell them thank you
- **If you see** someone eating alone in the cafeteria, do not let them eat alone.

If Fairfield takes these three steps, said Flood, and stops the toxic

About David Flood

A little background about motivational speaker David Flood:

- He is the married father of 2 children
- He is a board member of KIDS Plus, a non-profit, which helps students with special needs
- He is a member of the Drug and Alcohol Task Force in his hometown of Northport, New York
- He has been a lector in his church parish for 30 years
- He volunteers for hospice
- His recent Facebook video has received over 24 million views
- He has spoken in 26 states and Canada to more than 250,000 students
- The following link is to a video, called, “Why Love is the Only (Best) Way to Communicate,” from one of Flood’s presentations:

<http://bit.ly/DavidFloodVideo>

isolation from spreading, then maybe together the students can crack the next crisis making waves in the teenage community: Finding Justin a girlfriend.

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