

**Prompt:**

“You must always remember that the products of your mind can be used by other people either for good or for evil, and that you have a responsibility that they be used for good.”

— Dean Llewellyn M. K. Boelter

Boelter is arguing that one should not fall victim to ignorance. Once one is manipulated by their creeping desires, they lose their sense of reason, their sense of critical thinking. Once this is lost, their worldview becomes skewed and they fail to see the light in things that go against their beliefs. I largely agree with this statement. Open-mindedness is key to growth as a person, and key to not losing yourself in dangerous spirals.

We can see this in the movie *Midsommar*. In this movie, the main characters are thrown into this magical Scandinavian festival. Here, the characters are each preoccupied with their own desires - as most people are - which carries them throughout the film. The main character, Dani, is struggling in a broken relationship with her boyfriend Christian. Christian - along with another cast member - is preoccupied with the thesis they have to write for college. Another friend - more of a jock like dude - is just living in the moment but has a clear lack of respect for his surroundings. Each of these individual desires are so strong, that, despite the absolutely morbid atmosphere of the festival, and the creepily fake happiness seen everywhere, they go along with it. Dani herself, eventually accepts her position as the Midsommar festival “Queen,” and completely disregards all of the chaos, murder, and violence surrounding her. Her boyfriend ends up dying - but she is so lost in her own world, in finally finding acceptance, that she is “okay” with it.

On the other side, there’s the internet. When people cannot find communities in the real world, they turn to the internet for guidance. The internet is a cesspool of information, media and outlets - but also a recipe for getting lost in rabbit holes. When one feels lonely, or lost, and the internet seems like the only community willing to lend a hand - it seems like the perfect place to go to. But people get lost in this journey. Beheading videos, porn, a twitter feed of hate and destruction - one can easily get consumed in the media they are partaking in. This applies to general life as well. If one has grown up playing soccer, continues playing soccer in middle school, and then high school, they are going to be pretty convinced that their livelihood revolves on soccer. Change is a scary thing: they have not experienced other outlets and so their mind has been glued on soccer, something they know that they can trust to provide them happiness.

In all instances in life, it is good to be knowledgeable. Without knowledge - or at least an open mind, one is not willing to accept change or differing opinions. In today’s political climate, America is more divided than ever as democrats and republicans fight tooth and nail to solidify their beliefs. But this just means a lack of discussion. As humans, we have been given the glorious gift of conscience - the gift of critical thinking skills - what separates us from simple animals. We must use these skills to make valid judgments so that maybe, just maybe, the world can see a better tomorrow.