As children, we are taught to listen to our parents and do whatever it is they advise us to do. Of course, I am a firm believer in obedience, but I trust that our upbringing should have a limited amount of influence over the people we ultimately become and the ideologies we form.

I was always taught to eliminate two topics of discussion at the dinner table — politics and religion. Why is that? Yes it may make some people uncomfortable, but if you stop eating your entrée simply because someone made an innocent political comment then you may need to broaden your horizons.

Discussing important yet touchy issues enhances an individual's knowledge on certain subjects and allows one to see multiple viewpoints. As a 21-year-old college student, I have just now begun to query my beliefs in religion and politics. Why am I a Christian? Why am I a democrat? Now before tons of emails flood my inbox, take time to consider where your initial ideologies concerning religion and politics came from.

When I was a child, I was dressed in cute little dresses and clunky dress shoes and placed in a church pew for hours. However, I had no idea what the man in the long, fancy robe was saying nor did I understand why the congregation had to watch others go swimming … which was what I thought of baptism at the time. I knew that since my mom and dad were Christians and democrats, I was going to be a Christian and a democrat.

Now that I have done my own research, I have a strong belief in Christianity and strongly agree with the platform that the Democratic Party promotes. Needless to say, it is imperative that people find their own paths despite the beliefs of their guardians in order to fully be themselves.

It's a boy! Time to paint the nursery blue and purchase wallpaper with little baseballs and basketballs on it. Gender roles are forced onto children as soon as they are pulled from the womb. No, I do not think women should start an upheaval and try to get drafted into the NFL, but I do think that people should try not to cling onto the philosophies they were taught as a

child.

For instance, many people have observed their mothers routinely cook for their fathers and now can't even fathom the thought of being a man and cooking for a woman, or being a woman and having dinner prepared by a man. The environment you grew up in doesn't necessarily have to reflect the person you ultimately become.

Being different in today's society is mainly difficult because younger generations continue to take on the ideas of their nurturers. Nonetheless, times have changed, which means mindsets have to change as well. Racism will always exist if we continue to carry on ideas that were initially developed ages ago.

In a world where many people believe that African Americans and other minority groups are less likely to excel, we now have an African-American president. There are countless numbers of successful and intelligent minorities, who were once denied the same opportunities as the majority race. Times have altered tremendously, yet people seem to be stuck in their own frame of mind developed by what they've been taught by their elders.

Younger generations should practice researching things they may be unsure of in order to gain personal insight on certain topics. This is a different day and age, therefore new ideologies need to be produced.

If you want to be different, be different. If you're a man and you want to cook for a female, even though your father never touched the stove, do it. Our beliefs do not have to entirely resemble the convictions of our parents. Our beliefs can go up against socially constructed ideologies. You only have one life to live; make sure you're living for you.

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