Being a good person is the goal of liberal arts, professionalism, and citizenship dammit! Each component of my or anyone’s life, be it their job, their community, or their education is there to help create a well-balanced individual who can contribute to society, intellectually but also working in the community for a better future for all those inside it. Being able to provide for the defense of this nation not only in developing new technology but also being part of a large group of citizens whose goal is the protection and prosperity of the United States is unmatched in terms of profession and duty. Supporting those who defend and those who innovate is just as important as those actions themselves.

Freedom is the overarching idea behind these values, both in freedom to do what you want and intellectual freedom to disagree and develop new ideas. Of course, none of this happens without a way of communication between each member of society so one can safely and effectively disagree, and that is where professionalism holds value. In defending this nation, one also agrees to defend and uphold the great American society, with that also comes the guarantees in the constitution, not only freedoms of speech and idea. It is not only the jobs they have that hold communities together, but how they behave and interact, setting an example and becoming pillars of their communities. In the same vein, we should all strive for professionalism even if we are not professionals at the task at hand.

My liberal arts degree has introduced me to many such subjects I am not a professional at, this included. Rather the liberal arts degree provides a framework for how to approach new topics and holds the same standards as professionals and citizens in forming a functioning society. After all, everyone with a liberal arts degree is a citizen of knowledge and the discovery of new and innovative ideas should be embraced just as we embrace each other. The idea that knowing one subject is good enough is outdated; one must be able to grasp not only their specialty, but the world around them and how it interacts with their profession. Especially with the advent of the internet, people and practices are more interconnected than ever.

Those connections and communications must be secure and safe for anyone using the systems to trust them. For example, no one would use a postal service that loses 50% of packages, so why would a citizen accept a company who only listens 50% of the time. Professionalism cannot be lost due to importance. Everyone should be treated as equals and command equal respect in the field of freedoms. The projects worked on by defense contractors are worth billions of dollars, but they are still as accountable as any business would be, just as it is with citizens worth 0 to hundreds of billions. This equality extends even to thought, and no one should be denied education simply because they do not share the same mindset as the teacher.

Some may not even consider these outlooks, as who we are and seem to be to others are often not as similar as one may think. It is beneficial regardless of who/what/where you are to take time and reflect on who/what/where you are. Some of us are far along their journey through life and have seen many changes to the society that surrounds them. Yet others are still fresh off their education and have many years to influence the way society interacts, and, hopefully, bring about a better world. There is a responsibility of all of us, regardless of profession, education, or citizenship to collaborate and build that better world we often discuss.