

## Indifference: An Ignored Problem in Society

By Jaclyn Jacobs

A twenty-eight year-old woman was stabbed to death and a seven year-old girl was sexually assaulted and strangled. Two lives were gone, obliterated, in thirty minutes. The worst thing about this is that people watched, listened, and understood that those two lives were being taken, but did nothing to stop it. We are monsters because of our indifference towards the safety of lives of others; furthermore, that indifference causes completely innocent people to die. Being indifferent to people's suffering is similar to you being a New York Firefighter who decided to quit after you heard that the Twin Towers fell, simply because you "did not feel like dealing with it". Indifference is an ignored problem in our society, and all that you have to do to stop it is care.

Believe it or not, just caring enough to take action can save somebody's life. Kitty Genovese, who was stabbed to death in an attack that lasted half an hour, would be alive if one of the nearly forty neighbors who overheard her being attacked would have chosen not to disregard her screams for help. In fact, one neighbor did call 911. After the brutal attack on twenty-eight year-old Kitty Genovese was over; after she was dead (Terry 1). Why didn't that neighbor call in the thirty minutes during which she heard Kitty Genovese scream for her life? Sherrice Iverson was strangled, sexually assaulted, and her body was abandoned in a toilet. Yet Mr. Cash, a college student and friend of her attacker, saw what was happening and chose not to intervene during the attack on the defenseless young girl. Sherrice Iverson would have lived if he had intervened. Instead, she died at the age of seven (Long 1).

On a world-renown scale, during World War II the United States sent a ship containing thousands of refugees from Germany back to a German concentration camp after they had

reached American soil. We sent thousands of people to their slow, tortuous death after they thought they'd escaped it. President Roosevelt was attempting to prevent an influx of immigrants from entering the nation and our involvement in the war; unfortunately, that caused harm to thousands of people, and pain to their loved ones that survived. By doing something as simple as picking up a phone and dialing a three digit number, you can save somebody's life. One decision can save a life, or many. You can prevent people from enduring unbelievable pain and suffering. You just have to stop being indifferent to what happens to them.

Even the smallest of things can change, or save, somebody's life. One of my friends has been depressed and suicidal at times for the past five years. This past year he has had considerable issues dealing with his depression as a result of people not caring for him, which is also why countless others are depressed and suicidal. The fact that one person cared about him kept him from committing suicide at fifteen. That person was me. All I had to do was give him somebody to speak to when nobody else would. I was that one person he could always call when he was having a hard time, and I made sure he knew it.

On a similar note, World War II victims of concentration camps stated that the only excuse for the fact that they weren't being saved was that nobody could know. The entire world knew. The same thing occurred during the genocide of millions of Africans during multiple revolts, such as in Rwanda. Just imagine how betrayed those victims felt that billions of people knew what they were going through but weren't doing anything to stop it.

You may think "Oh gosh, that's horrible, how could they do such a thing". Kitty Genovese's neighbors did not call because they figured that one of the other thirty-seven neighbors had already done so. They followed the crowd, but doing so caused somebody to die slowly and painfully. Her neighbors also said that they did not want to put themselves in danger

(Terry 1). They were safe in their locked apartments, with a phone right there. They would not have been in danger by calling 911. Another excuse that somebody may have is “I’m not going to get upset over somebody else’s life. I just worry about myself first”, as Mr. Cash, the only witness to the attack on Sherrice Iverson, said. He didn’t even call 911. He left the bathroom until the attacker was done and then went gambling with him (Long 1). The life that he chose not to worry about was a defenseless seven year-old girl’s that was in danger at the hands of a much older and stronger man. People have multiple excuses for not acting, for being indifferent, but they truly are just excuses. Don’t be like Ms. Genovese’s neighbors or Mr. Cash. Be a savior.

I am pleading with you, knowing that you are a mother or father, daughter or son, sister or brother, or even just a friend. The pain of losing a loved one- a child, a parent, or a sibling- is unimaginable. You can stop numerous people from having to feel that pain. Imagine how the Genovese’s felt when they discovered that not only was their young daughter stabbed to death, but thirty seven people heard her die and didn’t do a thing to stop it. Imagine the pain that the Iverson family felt when they knew that their seven year old little girl, with such bright promises, died in a long, tortuous attack. Now further that pain with the fact that a man could have prevented such a thing but chose not to. For too many people, that pain is a reality. I am pleading with you to take action when you see an injustice, no matter how small. You can save or change at least one life. Be somebody’s Superman. Be their hero.

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