JOURNAL 20 - APATHY

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Youth activist

**Apathy Sucks**

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I'm a fairly outspoken person. Whether that's a flaw or not is purely subjective, but I've grown to accept the good with the bad. I was always taught that I should constantly educate myself on what is happening in the world around me -- especially if I ever wanted to be a leader. Turning a blind eye tends to do more harm than good and ignorant bliss isn't really living. I'm proud of my ability to look at different perspectives and form my own opinion based on a mix of experience, prior knowledge and newly presented facts, and I've always surrounded myself with people who had the ability to do the same.

But there are a lot of people (and this number seems to be growing) who seem to not have an opinion on anything. And, if they do, it's based off ideas and stories that have little to no underlying facts. They regurgitate the ideas they hear on mainstream media or from their peers without ever taking the time to read an article. Why? Because they don't care. And that ticks me off. Our world is messed up, there's no denying that. And a lot of the issues that we face today, we had no hand in creating as individuals. However, we bear the responsibility to fix the mistakes of our ancestors.

Our history is stained and it's up to us to fix it. It's a heavy burden to bear, I know. But, while a small group of people can create lasting change, it will take a joint effort on behalf of humanity as a whole to address the issues that we've ignored for so long. It is up to us to make the decision to either increase or alleviate the burden that will rest on the shoulders of our children.

By choosing to not care, to not have an opinion, to not take a stance, you are part of the problem. Ignoring something doesn't make it go away. And you cannot rely on others to fight for the world you want to live in. It's on you. And me. And all of us to build the world we want to live in. We've become so numb; we no longer care who is controlling our lives, as long as it isn't us. Because then we don't have to confront the issues that surround us every single day. And that scares the heck outta me.

I didn't even write this with a particular cause or issue in mind, because it's really just about finding your niche. What do you care about? How can you take action? What does that even mean --"taking action"? I feel as though this is the part scares people away from the idea of creating change, because we have such a narrow view of what "taking action" means. Talk to your neighbors, your peers. Educate others. Hold lively discussions. Change your point of view. Twice. And then again if you learn something new.

We are constantly growing and evolving as people. Taking action, to me, simply means refusing to stay silent. Because that discussion that you had with your neighbor at the bus stop leads to a group debate which sparks an idea for a blog or a video or a poster that goes viral and educates thousands of others and then, all of a sudden, there's a petition and endorsements and people pushing for legislation and actual change happening in communities around the country because one small action is never just one small action. It's a chain effect of people forming opinions, volunteering, sharing their ideas and building a revolution. So refuse to be silent. Scream at the world and demand that someone listen to you. Because you never know what could happen. But we all know that nothing will ever happen as long as there are good people who sit around and refuse to care about the world around them.

After all,

"The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people."

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

*This post originally appeared on my blog, rebekahbolser.wordpress.com.*

**What do you think of this teenager’s view of apathy? How does it compare to your own?**

**What issues do you have firm beliefs about? How did you come to believe what you believe? Where do you get your facts? How do you defend your beliefs?**

**Why do you think apathy is a problem with today’s youth? What will it take to reverse it?**

**What do you care about? How can you take action? What does that even mean --"taking action" to you?**

**How can you use the tools and what you are learning in this class to help reverse apathy and make a difference in the world right now? What issue would you like to do this with?**