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Silence

"Silence never encourages the tormented only the tormentor."

The Oxford Dictionary defines silence as "a complete absence of sound". However, in this case, it means a complete absence of standing up for yourself or the people around you, out of fear or lack of care. Throughout history and our modern lives, this statement has remained true and continues to resonate in all aspects of life, from the world stage of politics to local neighborhoods, schools and even our personal circles. From a young age we are taught to speak up against what we don't perceive to be right. There are countless examples worldwide of instances when silence put an individual or a group in harm's way, because of the fear of speaking up against the aggressor and protecting their own rights.

The tragic events of the Holocaust demonstrate the enormity of the consequences of being a silent majority.

"... They came for the Jews, I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me".-is the summary of the cowardice and silence held by the majority of German citizens who knew the atrocities of the Holocaust, as described by Martin Niemöller. It wasn't until General Eisenhower revealed the camps in Germany, that the public heard of concentration camps and of the inhumane monstrosities that the Germans had been committing throughout the war. The US's own allies, the USSR, refused to publicly acknowledge the existence of these camps until Eisenhower did so. They were ashamed that while knowing of them they didn't defend the rights of those being tortured within their walls.

In the modern world, issues might not seem as critical. Nevertheless, they still demand from us to continue implementing the lessons learned from past experiences of people not using their voices to speak up for what is right and defy the aggressors. Neutrality is not an option. "Neutrality will only help the oppressor, never the victim" - (Elie Wiesel). A modern example experienced by many is bullying. If an individual witnesses another person being bullied, whether that be online or in real life, what do you think they *would* do and what *should* they do? Sadly, the average people in our everyday lives, although they wouldn't like to admit it, would not stand up for others. This is not the way we should think. Every one of us has to be that person who takes a stance against the bully,

rather than waiting for something horrible to happen. You have to do what you hope others would do for you in this unfortunate situation.

Silence as a form of neutrality only serves to perpetuate the persecution of innocent people. The Holocaust is an eternal example of the horrors that may occur when individuals don't stand up and act for what is right. It is teaching us all the importance of treating others as you wish to be treated yourself, while promoting respect for all people.