

Merely Bystanders: The Psychology of Courage & Inaction

Catherine A. Sanderson
Amherst College





Understanding Inaction

POLL QUESTION #1



HAVE YOU EVER SEEN OR HEARD
SOMETHING THAT YOU FELT WAS
POTENTIALLY PROBLEMATIC, BUT
FAILED TO SPEAK UP?



YES



NO, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING
POTENTIALLY PROBLEMATIC



NO, I'VE NEVER FAILED TO SPEAK UP



The Perils of Ambiguity



Knowing how to attend to a
SEIZURE
 Most seizures last one or two minutes and generally end without harm.

911
 360
 800-368-6868

Symptoms of a seizure

Sensory changes	Mental changes	Physical changes	Post seizure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strange odor, often rubbery taste • Dull or overly sensitive • Distorted, empty, silent, or muffled • Tingling, burning, or numbness in part of the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion • Periods of blankness or "staring" or "spacing out" • Disorientation • Loss of awareness or consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerking • Tremors (or an "aura," tingling or numbness) • Flailing • Stiffening or jerking of muscles • Pupils fixed, staring • Flushing • Tongue sticking out and chomping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion • Disorientation • Weakness • Headache • Fatigue • Head, neck, throat soreness

What to do

Non-convulsive seizure	Convulsive seizure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch the person carefully • Stay with the person until they are fully alert • Gently roll the person to a safe area • Assess and support the person • Only call the person into the fire department if the seizure continues for more than 5 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the person • Place the person on their side in a safe area • Avoid putting anything in their mouth • Remove glasses and tight objects from the person's neck • CALL 911 if the seizure lasts over 5 minutes or the person is injured • Stay with the person until medical help arrives

This is not a complete list of seizure symptoms. Depending on the type of seizure there could be additional symptoms. Some symptoms may be due to other medical problems or side effects of medicines.



Who is Responsible?

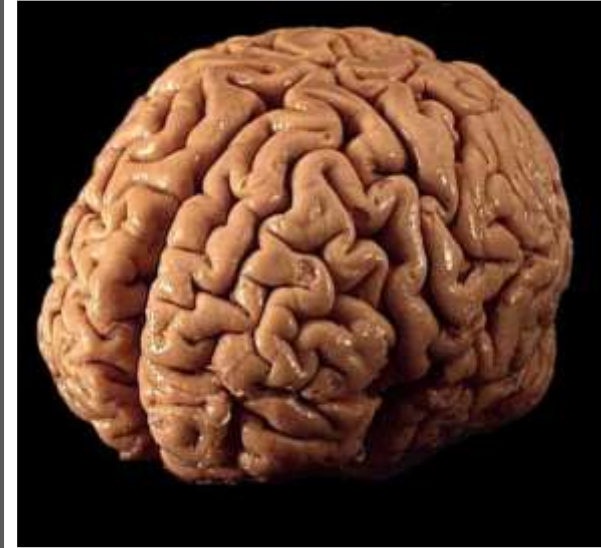
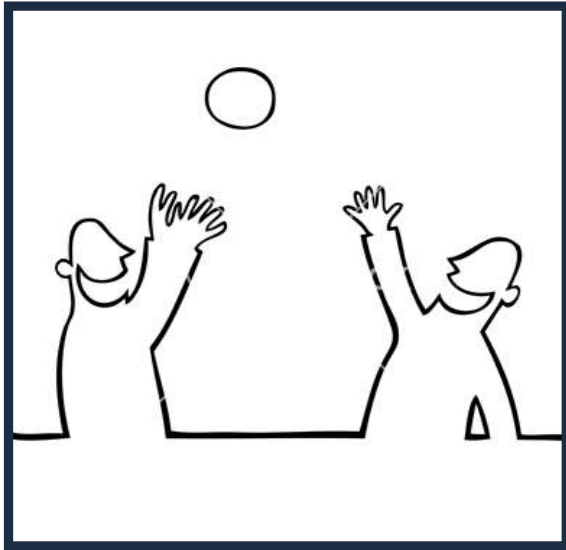
The Considerable Costs

- Safety
- Professional
- Personal



Richard D. Collins III, 27, already
wasn't allowed to buy. Don't drink and
drive.
Tobacco. Myrtle Beach. Marlin, Ill.
Blood at the gate and in the
ring.
Bill & Ted. SL. A big screen. Justin
Hartley and Taylor of the
Hartleys.





Rejection Feels Bad in the Brain

POLL QUESTION #2



And Now ... Strategies for Overcoming Silence and Inaction



“History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.” *By Martin Luther King, Jr*



Provide Training (and Practice)

An Example: Responding to Microaggressions

- **Ask for clarification:** “What did you mean by that?”
- **Separate intent from impact:** “I know you didn’t realize this, but ...”
- **Share your own process:** “I used to say that too, but then I learned ...”



Foster Empathy



Poem by Pastor Martin Niemoller

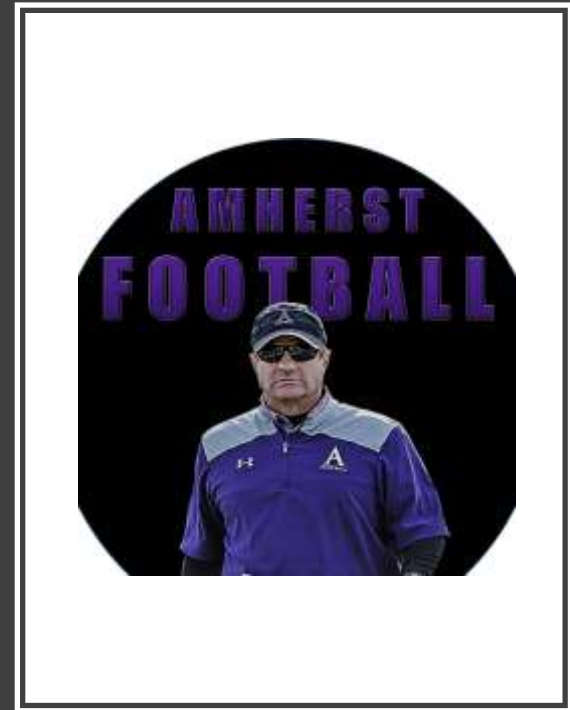
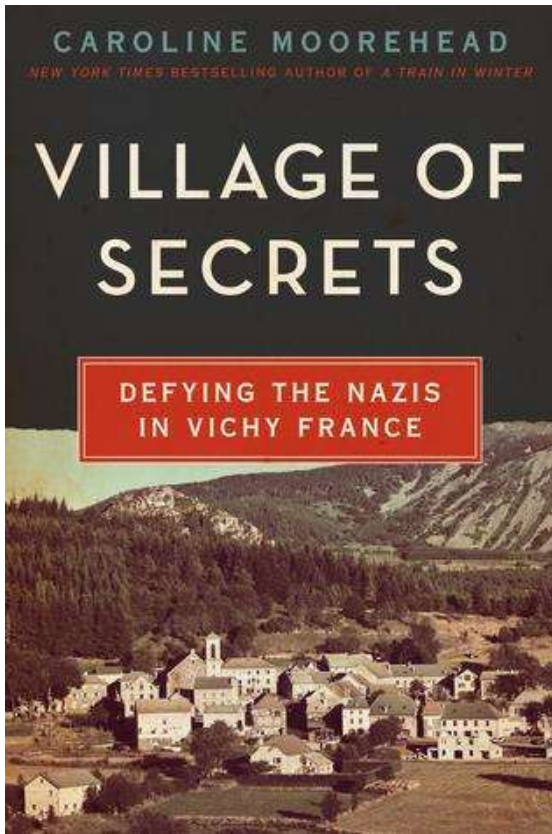
In Germany first they came for the communists and I didn't speak out – because I wasn't a communist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak out – because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak out – because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics
And I did not speak out –
Because I was a Protestant.

Then they came for me
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.



Look for Ethical Leaders



Find a Friend

Poll
Question #3:
Which
strategy do
you find the
most useful?

Get	Get training and practice
Foster	Foster empathy
Look	Look to ethical leaders
Find	Find a friend

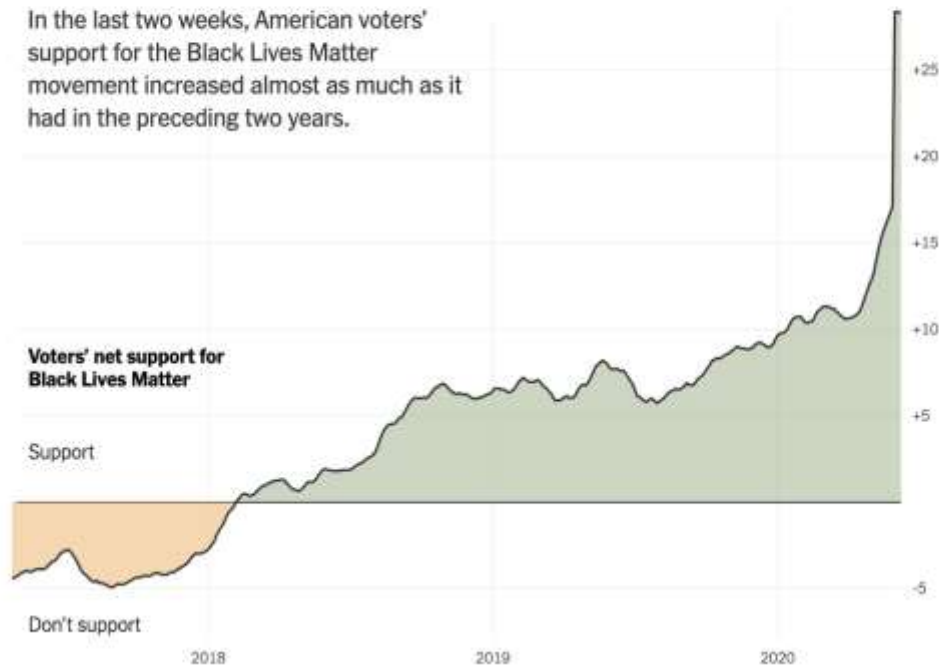


Change the Culture

How Public Opinion Has Moved on Black Lives Matter

By Nate Cohn and Kevin Quealy June 10, 2020

In the last two weeks, American voters' support for the Black Lives Matter movement increased almost as much as it had in the preceding two years.



The New York Times,
June 10,
2020

“Humans are caught – in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too – in a net of good and evil ... A man, after he has brushed off the dust and chips of his life, will have left only the hard clean questions: was it good or was it evil? Have I done well – or ill?” *By John Steinbeck*

*Thanks for
listening!*

Thoughts/
questions?
Want a copy of my
presentation?

why we
act

turning bystanders into
moral rebels

CATHERINE A. SANDERSON



SandersonSpeaking.com



casanderson@amherst.edu



SandersonSpeaking