

# Night and reflections on human suffering



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When I realize how far the world has come in the decades of the past, I marvel at man's ability to efficiently collaborate and make good things come out of teamwork, even through the barriers of the varying cultures in the world, including different languages, governments, and the great distances that lie between our countries. Together, our world has accomplished incredible tasks—from organizing the Olympic Games to our willingness to help after tragedy strikes.

Though much has been achieved, there have been events in history that have deeply dehumanized the human soul itself. Events such as the Holocaust have torn apart a nation, replacing German nationalism with a sick, brainwashed version of Adolf Hitler's belief system that those who do not classify as the "master race" should be purged without a second thought. When one sees through the eyes of the Holocaust victims, we are able to take a small glimpse at the unspeakable horrors and suffering of innocent people, such as concentration camp survivor Elie Wiesel. In his book *Night*, Wiesel writes, "Human suffering anywhere concerns men and women everywhere." We, as human beings, have the inherent, moral obligation to stand up to suffering.

Social injustices naturally are prevalent due to the wide variety of cultures and living standards in the world. Simply listening to the news, one could easily find themselves bombarded with the cries for help. It is common for a person to turn off the television when a problem tugs at their heartstrings. Why do we turn a blind eye to those who need a hand? No doubt, if we were in that position, we would request help immediately. Why don't we care enough to actually help others?

The answer lies in the selfish nature of mankind itself. Selfishness is the root of countless problems. Key factors play in the dismissal of helping others. Fear is a factor. People want to avoid the strenuous effort necessary to make his or her point. The trait of assertiveness lacks in countless people. We characteristically do not like conflict. Most of us would rather avoid conflict than stand up for others.

During the time of the Holocaust, the authority of the Nazi leaders and soldiers was intimidating. One wrong word could land a person in jail—or killed. Remembering the trip to the concentration camp, Wiesel recalled, “ I was afraid. Afraid of the blows. That is why I remained deaf to his cries...So afraid was I to incur the wrath of the S. S.” When an average person is given the “ upper hand” in a situation, the natural response is to take advantage of it, even if it hurts others. Nazi leaders pledged their loyalty to their country, yet they allowed their own people to perish at their feet.

Why should we stand up for others? People need to stand up for what they believe in. When they remain passive to the problem, they ignore what needs to be helped. There was a group, informally called the rescuers, that helped Jews and other victims escape their concentration camp-bound fate. Rescuers were “...ordinary people who became extraordinary people because they acted in accordance with their own belief systems while living in an immoral society” (Rescuers). These people joined together from every walk of life, peasant to prince, through the belief that these victims were simply human beings. They saved hundreds of lives. Rescuers rescued others because some were “ motivated by a sense of morality,” or they were adamantly opposed to the ideas of the Nazi society. Some children “ followed <https://assignbuster.com/night-and-reflections-on-human-suffering/>

in their parents' footsteps" and became rescuers—a prime example of the ripple effect (Rescuers). One person can change the world.

While we can no longer stand up to harsh Nazi leaders, a prevalent number of social injustices exist in the world today. The belittling of others is one example. Walking through a high school, one would assume that it is full of people of all different races, shapes, sizes, and personalities. With this variety of people comes the idea that everyone has incomparable intellectual and social abilities. We are taught not to judge others based on opinions, yet most people would agree that this is one of the most common feelings in a high school: judgment of others. Why do people judge others so harshly without first evaluating themselves? The Holy Bible states, " Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment" (English Standard Version, John 7: 24). You should not judge someone without first spending a day in the other person's shoes.

Staying silent about injustices is not right: it is similar to the inequity of the victim's aggressor. In the conclusion of his book's preface, Wiesel writes, " Those who kept silent yesterday will remain silent tomorrow."