

# Change Doesn't Happen at Rallies.

I, along with 8 million others across the world, attended a rally on Saturday to speak out against the inappropriate, immoral and illegal actions of the president and his toadies. We demanded change. It was great, feeling the enthusiasm, seeing the signs, listening as folks driving by honked their horns in support. Made me feel good. Maybe, I thought, we're starting to turn the corner in this country, maybe we're on our way to making America great again.

Not so fast.

After the rally, I attended my 14 year-old grandson's baseball game. A typical game until the sixth inning. Then this happened.

The pitcher was having trouble throwing strikes. The opposing team was heckling him from the dugout. As the pitcher's control worsened the heckling got a louder, more personal, and the pitcher was clearly affected. Suddenly he lost it. He stormed over to the front of the dugout, and screamed at the top of his lungs "Shut your fucking nigger mouths!"

The umpire gently warned the pitcher that if this happened again, he would be thrown out of the game. The pitcher's coach told the pitcher from his dugout to 'get control of your emotions'. Nobody else said a thing. The kid remained in the game, went back to the mound and promptly threw at, and beamed the next batter. Nothing was said, the batter walked to first shrugging it off. The kid continued to pitch, the opposing bench continued to heckle. The game went on.

Yes, you heard me right. A 14 year-old kid dropped the f-bomb and yelled the n-word at the top of his lungs at a group of teenagers in a supervised setting in front of about sixty adults with no consequences. Everything continued as if nothing untoward had happened. Just another moment in a youth baseball game. Not a single adult in authority did a god-damned thing.

I sat there wondering if I was the only one that thought this was troubling. And I had so many questions.

Why didn't the coach of the heckling team tell his boys to knock it off? Why didn't the pitcher's coach, realizing that his player was so upset, go out and calm him down?

Why did the umpires allow the pitcher to stay in the game after his outburst? Why didn't both coaches get involved after the umpire's inaction? Why didn't the pitcher's parents get involved, is the n-word ok in their family?

After the game ended, did parents talk with their kids about the incident? I'd sure like to think so; surely some did. If so, an unfortunate moment at a meaningless children's game pivoted to a lesson learned by impressionable teenagers desperately seeking to find their identity. If the parents said nothing, and I suspect most did after overhearing the conversations on the way out, the only lesson learned by those teenagers on Saturday night is that there are no consequences for bad behavior.

I'd like to think that the incident on Saturday night was a one-off. That the umpires, the coaches, the parents were just having a bad night. But I would be wrong, we see this behavior every day. And I'm not talking about a 14 year old dropping a f-bomb and using the n-word.

I'm talking about the inaction, apathy and complete cowardice of folks in charge towards inappropriate behavior. I'm talking about the lack of moral courage from too many leaders in government, business, religion all the way down to coaches, teachers and parents too, unwilling, unable or afraid to stand up, speak out and do the right thing.

Yes, the rally was great on Saturday. Public protest has a place. But, unfortunately, 8 million people marching and demanding change won't move the needle much regarding the change needed in this country.

Until way more everyday people in this country find the moral courage to speak up against behavior such as happened in a kid's baseball game on Saturday night, nothing will change. In fact, things will get worse. As we've seen, bullies whom are not confronted become elected leaders.

You see, what you tolerate is what you get, silence is complicity. Good or bad, like it or not, we will always have the country we deserve.

**That's all I'm sayin'**

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