

We Can

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By Jenna Medlin-Roark

I am at a loss for words. Today I woke up and opened my social media. It was a normal morning for me as I made my coffee in the kitchen. I opened up twitter and that is when I saw the video. I saw the video of George Floyd, an innocent black man being killed by a police officer. It has been weighing on my heart all day long. How could we let that happen? How could the police, someone we pay to protect us, every single one of us, allow a black man to be killed again. I thought about whether or not I should write this all day. Should I, a white woman, be putting my two cents into this matter? "What business do I have saying anything about this?", I thought to myself.

Today I realized my white privilege. Today I realized just how screwed up this world still is. We have still not moved past our country's racist past. When is enough going to be enough? When are we going to live in a world where discrimination does not exist? My struggle with whether or not to write this was because I did not feel that as a white woman, I should not try to act like I know what black people are going through, because I do not. I should not feel like the looks that I get when I walk into a restaurant or into a store are the same as what a black person is getting. We need to stop pretending that racism is gone. We need to stop pretending that everything is okay. It is not okay. It is not okay for black men and women to be shot, killed, suffocated, and discriminated against because they were not born white.

It is not enough to believe that racism is happening. It is not enough to acknowledge the existence of it. No matter who you are, no matter what your skin color is, it is your responsibility to ACT. I thought that because my brother was not white and because some of my best friends were black that I was doing enough to get by, enough to show the world that I stand with people of color. That is not enough. That is enough to make people feel better in their white privilege, enough to make us think that we do not have the upper hand. It is not enough. Until a black man or woman can walk down the street as I do in my white privilege, it will never be enough.

We can change the future of this country and of this world. We can stand up for what is right. We can stand up for every man, woman, and child of our country. We can stand together. We can fight this discrimination. We can create a better world for our children and grandchildren. A world where they are not being killed in the name of racism and pure evil. Where my white child will not tease and discriminate against someone that has a different color skin than their own. We need to teach them that every one of us are human. We bleed the same blood, we feel the same feelings, we have families, and we love the same love. Some of us may have different cultural backgrounds, come from different countries with different accents and dialects, but we share our humanity with each other. We must feel an obligation to pass this to our children and our peers.

I cannot and will never understand what it means to be black and what it means to be discriminated against for the color of my skin. What I can do, is use my voice to stand up for

what is right, and to be a voice of support for every person of color on this planet. I can stand hand in hand with you and scream at the top of my lungs, that black lives matter.