

EDITORIAL

When One Lacks Will, They Denounce...

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So much needs to change, and so many who have so much do so little that it makes us wonder why. Recently, Walmart; the American College of Cardiology, the Association of Black Cardiologists, and the American Heart Association (American College of Cardiology, 2020; Walter, 2020); the Memphis Interfaith Coalition for Action and Hope; the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (McCombs, 2020); Columbia Sportswear and Nike (Bjorke, 2020); and sports legends alike have pronounced their positionality to denounce racism and violence. We are not sure, but it is quite likely that those police officers who were involved in Mr. George Floyd's death would denounce racism and violence. Some police chiefs have made the news denouncing racism and violence, though each of those who did so was unarmed and among peaceful protestors. So many voices are being raised to call for change and address the need for systemic racism and violence to end. These announcements are comforting, for sure, but we as American consumers understand that business is business and that Nike and many other companies denouncing racism and violence make their money on the "dollar-acracy" of Black super athletes; in this case, positionality is good for business and words are cheap. Isn't it time for action now? I want to push that further actually. Perhaps it is time for a little less business positioning and a lot more action.

The facts are facts concerning the events that spurred this national conversation. Well, the media and the Public Relations moguls seem to have a specific idea of what those facts are, and perhaps too many people believe those "facts." There were news stories indicating that Mr. Floyd was a criminal, a spurious designation that was intentionally misleading and not supported by the events that transpired. Yes, there have been many arguments centered on this "fact" and a multitude of others, but I think there are several facts we can all assess and agree upon: Mr. Floyd was suspected of a crime, Mr. Floyd remained on the scene long enough for police to respond, and Mr. Floyd cooperated with police by allowing himself to be arrested

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and handcuffed. Furthermore, no charges had been filed, so Mr. Floyd was not yet accused, and, of course, he was not found guilty in a court of law by a jury of his peers. Therefore, he was not a criminal. Now he is denied the opportunity to face his accusers and was denied his right to a speedy trial. He was accused, tried, and sentenced on the street in public view while all too many people watched. It was a public execution.

"Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." These are guaranteed to all Americans, well, as long as you are not Black. Right? The United States Declaration of Independence contains these three **"unalienable rights."** Within the Declaration of Independence, it says that these rights have been given to all humans by their creator and that our governments (local, state, and national) were created to protect them. Is the government protecting these rights for EVERYONE? How can students learn, how can our society progress, how can families be secure when there is no law that demands that those in police custody remain safe and at least in the same life state as when they are arrested? When will police training be focused on preserving the life of those in their custody?

Well, custody is an interesting word. Police use it as a term for when someone has been arrested. The technical definition of custody is the protective care or guardianship of someone or something. Was Mr. Floyd in custody? Nope! Well, I have heard that Mr. Floyd was under arrest and had not yet moved to custody before his death; that's another "fact" floating around. The definition of arrest, interestingly, is to seize (someone) by legal authority and take them into custody. Yes, an arrest is the seizing of someone or something, and that act places the person or thing in the custody of the duly authorized officers performing the arrest. Mr. Floyd was in the custody of the arresting officers. So, how should someone treat someone or something once they are in their custody?

This is a tough question, because what keeps coming up is the concept of ordinary care. Ordinary care necessitates the preservation of the status of the person or object in police custody to all reasonable but not extraordinary measures. Was there an effort on the officers' part to exercise ordinary care? Watch the video of Mr. Floyd's arrest and his treatment while in police custody—see what you think. Then ask yourself how would you feel if Mr. Floyd was your father, child, brother, cousin, or nephew?

What is our responsibility though in the face of this horrific act? I think to answer this question, we first must recognize who we are and what power we have. We are teachers, researchers, friends, and colleagues. In short, we are influencers, ones who have privileged status and positions. But how are we going to use this privilege? Do we simply submit our words of support with all the other people and organizations who have done so? That doesn't seem enough. It has never seemed enough. We must use our individual and collective privilege to act and spur change. If you are not using it now, you don't deserve it. Give it back.

We need to go beyond words and help educate those who are doing the most to better society in the present by peacefully demonstrating and thereby placing themselves at risk of COVID-19 infection. We must help them develop messaging that provokes change and not just dissent. This is one of those pivotal moments where one must act to avoid being the disruption and become a disruptor.

Productively Using Frustration and Anger

There have been many trying times in U.S. history, each punctuated by precipitating events that stemmed from long-standing social ills, many of which are still unresolved. Perhaps none are more pervasive and insidious than White privilege and systemic, pernicious, and well-entrenched racism. Recently, that racism came to the forefront with Mr. Floyd's execution. Unfortunately, these current trying times seem to be playing out just as others have. While I applaud high-profile people and organizations taking on aspects of the big issue, I am concerned that the BIG issue is not at the forefront of the conversation.

How will we as educators use these events to educate children, to reach out to our peers, colleagues, and friends, and, finally, how will mathematics education change as a result of these conversations? I think the current needs of society require us as mathematics educators to not only do what we can to support the current peaceful protests and calls for reform, but to also reflect on our own practices and field and make necessary changes. A number of researchers have claimed that mathematics success is an equalizer and that those who are successful in mathematics are among a privileged class. When and how are we going to use mathematics to privilege young Black and Brown children? How will we educate new teachers to assume the mantle of leadership in the classroom and foster the mathematical success of Black and Brown children?

As editor-in-chief, I challenge you to think deeply about these events, consider responses to the questions I raise, and use your time, talents, and research prowess to answer these questions in order to make a change today for the world of tomorrow that we must build together.

Our team has secured permission to reprint two amazing publications that were clearly ahead of their time and speak to our current situation. A special thank you to Mr. George F. Johnson, President & Publisher of Information Age Publishing Inc., and Dr. Chance Lewis, Professor and Founder of the International Conference on Urban Education, for granting permission to reprint these two articles. I hope you find them timely and inspirational.

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