

The Power of Silence

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once stated, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.” In my interpretation of this quote, King is saying that when friends don’t stand up for us against our enemies, our silent friends will be more memorable than the enemies. We often expect poor treatment from our enemies so when our expectations are fulfilled, it may not be pleasant but at least it was expected. A friend, however, is trusted and expected to stand beside you no matter what. When instead a friend is silent and doesn’t have your back, it hits you out of nowhere and is not easily forgotten. Humans remember pain well, especially that inflicted by someone we care for and who cares for us.

Being hurt by a friend is a thousand times worse than being hurt by an enemy. For example, when I was in middle school there was a girl in my grade who I would consider to be my enemy. She and I could never get along, and we always ended up in the same room, sending stink eyes and glares back and forth from across the room while I attempted to avoid eye contact with no avail. One day, she took things a step further; she went from making faces across a classroom to making rude comments behind my back and eventually to my face. I thought nothing of it at first. Obviously it hurt, but I knew anyone who really knew me and really cared would know better than to believe whatever rumor she was spreading. Boy, was I wrong. My best friend at the time overheard a group of girls talking about me and, rather than walking away or telling them to stop, she leaned in closer. As she listened to what they were saying, she began believing their stories. I had no idea why, but she began ignoring me and even began spreading the rumors herself. When I found out she was doing this, it was a massive shock to my system. Here was my

best friend stabbing me in the back, someone who I cared about and trusted giving up my trust like I never mattered to her. To say that it hurt would be an understatement.

To this day, I don't remember the rumor or what she said but the hurt I felt is as clear as day. The words people say can often fade in our memory or become unclear quickly but the way someone makes us feel (with their words or with a lack thereof) will remain in our minds forever. What also sticks with us, however, is when someone makes us feel good and loved. If a good friend stands up for you against your enemies you will surely keep that act of kindness and true friendship in your heart. The people we choose to spend time with matter a lot to us and so does the way they treat us.

Silence can speak louder than the harshest of words, and the loudest of all is the silence of a betraying friend or a bystanding companion. You would stand up for those whom you hold dear, wouldn't you? I know I would, so when they wouldn't do the same it can be painful. The feeling of being let down by someone you would do anything for is a feeling beyond comparison. It's a feeling from which some may never recover, resulting in the loss of a once close friend for good.