Power creates responsibility

When there is chaos in the world, those with the ability to make their voices hear and the power to influence opinions have a moral responsibility to society. Sometimes, there is difficulty in figuring out what to say, what to support, and what actions to take. Most of the time, there are choices that are clearly right and clearly wrong. The question shouldn't be "What will others think of me for saying this? Rather, the question should be "What is the morally correct response?"

The recent violent protests in Charlottesville are a prime example of when there is a clear, morally correct choice. The white supremacists have a history of violent altercations, upon which their whole platform stands. They believe they are the "master race." They believe that all people with different skin colors, different religions and different sexual orientations are inferior to them. The Ku Klux Klan wants to kill others who are not the same as them. Just knowing this basic information about white supremacists should be enough to tell you that siding with them is the morally wrong choice.

CEOs have the responsibility to stand up for what is morally right and to make their voices heard. As the leaders of large and powerful companies, they have influence not only over their consumers, but also over the vast resources that their various companies possess and the multitudes of employees who work for them. Small changes in the working environment of a company can build up and flow out into the world.

Having power without using it to make society better is a selfish thing to do. While taking a position on a controversial issue could potentially hurt the profits of corporations that the CEOs represent, do they really want to lead a company that has a history of not doing the right thing? There is no excuse to ignore controversial issues in today's society. Corporations are made up of many people from diverse backgrounds. Corporations' consumers are even more diverse. The only way CEOs and their corporations can represent everyone is by encouraging everyone to come together and unite, despite religious differences, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or social class. With that in mind, it is in a CEO's best interest to stand up and speak out for equality, tolerance and unity. According to a recent article in *Harvard Business Review* by Nour Kteily and Francesca Gino, staying silent can lead a CEO's employees to be unsure about their employer's moral character. The public could be led to believe that the corporation does not care about what is happening, or worse, that it supports what is morally wrong. Speaking out is the only way to create the change needed in the world.

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