

## Our Responsibility to Know

On Thursday, February 24, I had just finished watching a movie with my roommates, when we began to receive dozens of notifications. Immediately, it was clear that something was wrong in the world, and upon turning on the TV we began to witness the horrors on the other side of the globe, as Russia began their invasion of Ukraine. We all saw it coming from the months of build up- but it still genuinely shook me.

In the following days and weeks, I was glued to the internet and news, trying to keep up on the invasion, and continually hoping for a peaceful resolution as immediately as possible. Yet, this is not what we received, nor what Ukraine deserved. As the damage and casualties accumulated, so did the mental burden from witnessing such horror unfold. In response, I withdrew, and didn't look up the conflict for weeks.

While this allowed me to relax, it demonstrated ignorance and carelessness for the suffering of others. Not only this, but I felt guilty for neglecting the conflict. In response, I've been compelled to continue staying up to date on the conflict, because no amount of burden that we experience from watching the war unfold is comparable to the suffering of those in the middle of it.

On that note, I am here to emphasize our Responsibility to Know. In such a globalized society where nearly everyone is connected, we all have the ability to stay informed, yet not enough people exercise this. While we exist in a country with little to no noticeable conflict, countless others are subject to the whims of unjust individuals and inequitable practice, but we are not powerless. Through demonstrating interest alone and educating those around us, we help each other to stay informed while fostering empathy and advocating for change. These things are not possible if we neglect our global injustices.

At its very core, the root of our responsibility to know is privilege. Because of wealth, opportunity, or geographic advantages alone, we are not subject to the same pains as those around the world, but this is not something we should or can forget about. As people of privilege, we are the only ones with the power to advocate for change, and begin adding momentum to social justice causes and the resolution of conflict through communication and collaboration. In fact, the more privileged we are- the more power we have to know and care about the suffering of others, and finding peaceful resolution to said conflicts.

To my knowledge, there has been no casualty-free conflict in the world that has been resolved through physical harm, so it is astounding that nations have resorted to harm in modern times to get their way. We have done better in the past, and we can do better today.

So in summary, I want to emphasize that with privilege comes the responsibility to know and be aware of the trials and injustices happening globally. I also want to stress that it is not a stretch to exercise this responsibility when you're in a position of privilege. It takes practice, but is achievable to know and care. You can look up news on your phone, ask a friend, turn on the news, or even reflect on the injustices that you are aware of. We are all able to do even the smallest things to increase our awareness and the awareness of those around us. With this awareness comes momentum and peaceful change.

I'd like to thank Hope May, Michael Buzzy, and the CMU Center for International ethics for making this event happen, especially on a day as impactful as Earth Day. I'd also like to thank Teresa Homsj, Maddie Thomas, Michael Livingston, and all the other student leaders who helped to make Earth Week at CMU a reality. Finally, I'd like to end with this quote from the second clause of the The Rule of Harmony #3: "Seek each day to utter some work or perform some little action which may promote the cause of peace, whether at home or abroad."