I'm not a lifeguard, how about you?

How extreme must our fellow citizens' ignorance be before we stop making excuses for them? It's like a person who can swim drowning in a pool because they didn't want to swim. More people need to be responsible, not rescued.

I feel strongly about this so I'm going to risk pissing you off before asking for your help. Take a dive off the high board. Let's find out if you drown in disapproval or surface in agreement?

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This is about willful ignorance, the state of brutal bliss which explains why most of you have chosen dependent thought and to let South Africa fall apart.

Politicians happily lie to the Public, safe in the knowledge that the Public would rather be stupid than change what they know. Selling fear of the unknown is ironically more powerful an aphrodisiac than selling truth and merit.

Willful ignorance is when a person knows the truth but chooses to ignore it. Or, as a more precise example, when a person chooses to have more faith in their beliefs than allow the opportunity for their intellect to prove them wrong. Willful ignorance, in the context of violent South Africa, is political religion choosing the colours of skin and parties over reasonable arguments and facts. The willfully ignorant refuse to acknowledge anything that doesn't pretend to agree with them, even if their world contradicts their position by falling apart around them.

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Before you automatically apply your inflexible DA versus ANC and ANC versus DA positions, read these examples:
1. Gayla Benefield, a resident of the picaresque, small town of Libby in Montana, was shocked to find out that the mortality rate of her town was 80 times higher than the American average. She discovered asbestosis from the local mine, **W.R. Grace and Company**, to be the cause. The disease would kill over 400, including her parents. She, her husband and much of her extended family would get the disease. It would later be alleged that the mine had knowingly ejected 2300kg of asbestos laced dust into the air daily for years. Furthermore, it was in the bark of firewood, in compost for gardens, and used in the building of sports fields for schools. Benefield campaigned for three decades to expose the presence of the disease and the mine as the cause. She was vilified by her community. Victims were labelled as liars extorting the company. Some took to putting bumper stickers on their cars saying, "I Don’t Have Asbestosis.” Their willful ignorance led to painful respiratory and cancerous deaths.

2. There are variations but many Creationists believe Earth was made in six of our calendar days, six thousand years ago, Genesis is a historical account, and humans lived amongst dinosaurs. Noah took pairs of every species aboard a cruise liner that Harry Potter would've been proud of (that’s millions of living and now extinct species). Willfully ignorant Creationists refuse science, or reinterpret science so that it isn’t science, so as to maintain unprovable belief i.e. faith. This from people whose religion was allegedly transcribed by people who believed the earth was flat and that the stars revolved around them. Notably, more adaptable religions, for whatever reason, have realigned their beliefs so that the bible is a moral guide and their God, encompassingly, created science and evolution.

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   It’s seen across South Africa (and particularly within my experience of trying to expose the crimes of the DA) that detractors use insults instead of logic. Some people support what I say purely because they’re not DA.

   Both sides resort to double standards determined by whether or not the crime was committed by the political party they're affiliated too. There's no moral high ground, no right or wrong, just party versus party hatred. Often this is based upon race.

   So why do they do this? Why do many of you do this?

   **Rational Wiki** states that “willful ignorance is a mechanism that actually protects the
brain from becoming unable to function in situations that it just can’t handle.” I prefer the term “tactical stupidity” as the consequence of illogical action is as important as the action itself.

The second reason is conformity. “People tend to believe what those around them believe, and questioning those beliefs would lead to conflict and likely rejection, and as any insecure adolescent knows, the last thing one would want to happen is to be a social reject.”

In the case of Knysna, both reasons are relevant, emphasised by financial status and fear.

I’ve written over a million words explaining my position on politics and crime yet a detractor’s inelegant argument will be as empty of substantiation, debate and construction as, “Mike, you’re a cunt” or “You must be ANC”. As on News24’s comment sections and this blog, these preconceived personal beliefs (that are an avoidance of evidence) tend to be fired from people with fake profiles, further diminishing their credibility and emphasising public participation devoid of substance.

Conservatism and bias is a regressive storm upon South Africa. A culture of hate-drenched, willful ignorance begs our destruction.

The greed of politicians and their corporate sponsors, and their abuse of Public ignorance, is as self-fulfilling as the Public’s volunteered self-destruction. It’s an uncanny state of affairs that breathes in the moment whilst killing the future.

Jodi Picoult, the author, summed it well: “Sometimes we find ourselves walking through life blindfolded, and we try to deny that we’re the ones who securely tied the knot.”

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It isn’t only beliefs and political identities needing self-questioning. You can make a difference through small actions. If you're not a sociopath, it'll make your life happier whilst helping your community.

It's easy to be a good person without the risk of jail, only the pleasure of your time. You could take a weekly bag of potatoes and carrots to the local soup kitchen, give a fruit a day to a street beggar, attend community meetings, listen to the lonely at old-aged homes, or take the dogs at the local shelter for a walk on the weekends.

Don't be daunted by the few who may be unappreciative (not all vagrant druggies
want a breakfast banana, and if they throw it at you, you've got a funny story to tell). Don't let a few setbacks be an excuse to stop you from being a good person.

The key is repetition. It must become part of your life. Then you're more likely to find fuzzy pleasure through your growing empathy - the best good deeds are that two-way street. And if you've got kids, be sure to let them witness what you do, or better yet, find something you can do with them.

You can make a difference in your neighbourhood. You may not change the world but maybe your kids and grandchildren can.

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Did you reach the other side of the pool by yourself?

Excellent.

Keep swimming with me...

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