



I'm not proud to say it, but I can remember stepping on other people to build myself up. When I was in high school, I was a starting player on the football team. I'm not gonna lie; I felt good about being a starter on the team. There was another guy on our team whose name was Jack. It still is. Jack wasn't very good at football. I'm not putting him down; it's just not where his natural gifts or talents lay. Jack wanted to be a part of the team so badly he came to practice every day. He came early and stayed late just to fit in, just to belong.

In my school, if you were a guy with any size, you played football. If you were big or built and didn't play football, others would label you and call you names. That's the way it was in my town. For some, it didn't seem okay to pursue your own talents or dreams; it wasn't acceptable to just be yourself.

The truth is Jack made the team only because the coach never cut anyone. Do you think the "starters" accepted him as part of the team? I wish I could say yes, but the reality is no. They laughed at him, mocked him, and used him as a blocking dummy. They had a lot of fun at his expense.

One day after practice, as I hung out in the middle of the field, someone yelled, "Bob, look at Jack!" I turned around and saw how the other starters had ganged up on Jack and hung him on the fence post... by his jock strap. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I laughed uncontrollably along with everyone else. There he hung with his arms and legs dangling and flailing as he tried to get down.

I enjoyed the prank, that is, until I walked by Jack on my way to the locker room. I saw how embarrassed he was. What gripped my heart the most were the tears flowing down his cheeks. I hung my head in shame as I walked by and thought, "Jack didn't deserve that. He never did anything to hurt our team. He actually would have done anything to help the team. He just wanted to belong. He just wanted to fit in."

Experts say the number one reason people join gangs is for a sense of belonging. Do you know what makes me sad? Some gangs, after initiation, would have treated Jack better than our team and school treated him.

After I shared this story at a high school, the captain of the football team approached me and said, "That's a powerful story, but you have to finish it."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You need to tell everyone how you helped Jack down and became his friend."

I'm sorry to say I couldn't do that, and still can't, because all my stories are true. I knew what the other guys were doing was wrong, but I didn't help Jack down. I turned my head and walked on by. I didn't stand up for him.

Please hear me! I feel I was just as guilty as the people who put him up on the fence because I didn't do anything to help and didn't tell anyone. So, why didn't I do what was right? Who did I say put him up there? It was some of the other starters – you know, the guys I wanted to be "in" with too.

I'm not writing this book to tell you what you should or shouldn't do. You need to do what you believe is right. I believe it's written on your heart. But I have found this to be true; the right choice isn't always the popular choice, and the popular choice isn't always right.

*Excerpt from Dignity Revolution: Standing Up for the Value of Every Person (Lenz 12).*



## Jack's Story Worksheet

Write down as many bystander behaviors you can identify Bob doing during the football event.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



I'm not proud to say it, but I can remember stepping on other people to build myself up. When I was in high school, I was a starting player on the football team. I'm not gonna lie; I felt good about being a starter on the team. There was another guy on our team whose name was Jack. It still is. Jack wasn't very good at football. I'm not putting him down; it's just not where his natural gifts or talents lay. Jack wanted to be a part of the team so badly he came to practice every day. He came early and stayed late just to fit in, just to belong.

In my school, if you were a guy with any size, you played football. If you were big or built and didn't play football, others would label you and call you names. That's the way it was in my town. For some, it didn't seem okay to pursue your own talents or dreams; it wasn't acceptable to just be yourself.

The truth is Jack made the team only because the coach never cut anyone. Do you think the "starters" accepted him as part of the team? I wish I could say yes, but the reality is no. They laughed at him, mocked him, and used him as a blocking dummy. They had a lot of fun at his expense.

One day after practice, as I hung out in the middle of the field, someone yelled, "Bob, look at Jack!" I turned around and saw how the other starters had ganged up on Jack and hung him on the fence post... by his jock strap. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I laughed uncontrollably along with everyone else. There he hung with his arms and legs dangling and flailing as he tried to get down.

I enjoyed the prank, that is, until I walked by Jack on my way to the locker room. I saw how embarrassed he was. What gripped my heart the most were the tears flowing down his cheeks. I hung my head in shame as I walked by and thought, "Jack didn't deserve that. He never did anything to hurt our team. He actually would have done anything to help the team. He just wanted to belong. He just wanted to fit in."

Experts say the number one reason people join gangs is for a sense of belonging. Do you know what makes me sad? Some gangs, after initiation, would have treated Jack better than our team and school treated him.

After I shared this story at a high school, the captain of the football team approached me and said, "That's a powerful story, but you have to finish it."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"You need to tell everyone how you helped Jack down and became his friend."

I'm sorry to say I couldn't do that, and still can't, because all my stories are true. I knew what the other guys were doing was wrong, but I didn't help Jack down. I turned my head and walked on by. I didn't stand up for him.

Please hear me! I feel I was just as guilty as the people who put him up on the fence because I didn't do anything to help and didn't tell anyone. So, why didn't I do what was right? Who did I say put him up there? It was some of the other starters – you know, the guys I wanted to be "in" with too.

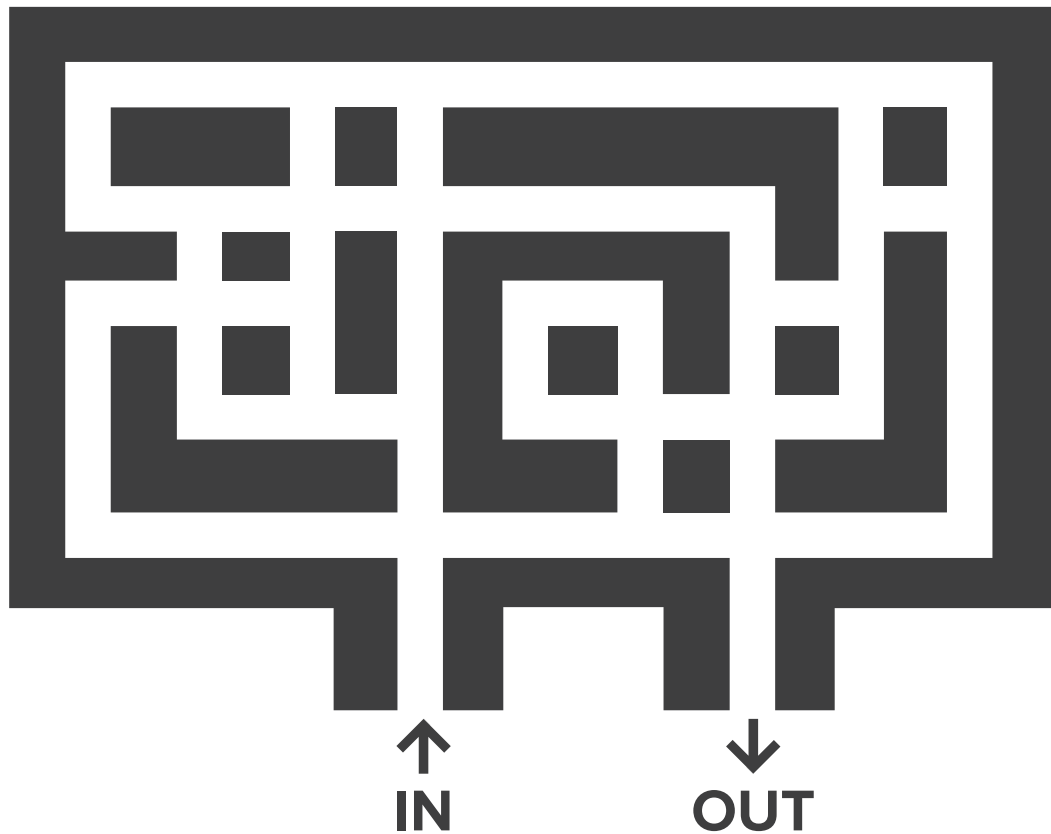
I'm not writing this book to tell you what you should or shouldn't do. You need to do what you believe is right. I believe it's written on your heart. But I have found this to be true; the right choice isn't always the popular choice, and the popular choice isn't always right.

*Excerpt from Dignity Revolution: Standing Up for the Value of Every Person (Lenz 12).*



**Directions:**

**Travel from the IN to OUT without making a single right turn! Can you manage it?**







Give each student a small card that they can use as a reminder when confronting difficult situations.

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)

**I Messages:**  
**I feel...**(emotion)  
**When you...**  
 (describe hurtful behavior)  
**Because...**  
 (how it impacted you or others)  
**I need...**  
 (action requested or completed by you)