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Taking Education for Granted

Education is the pathway towards having a successful life. It can provide you your dream job, a comfortable lifestyle, prove others wrong who said you'll never make it, or set the example for younger siblings on what you can accomplish. Malala Yousafzai's view is that every girl that is deprived of education deserves the right to learn. Our voice is the most powerful weapon we have and should be able to speak out for what's right. Malala Yousafzai emphasizes that "one child, one teacher and the use of a book, paper, and pen can change the world." Here in the United States we take education for granted. Many students wake up every morning and dread coming to school. They don't realize that there's many people that don't have that privilege and would love an opportunity to learn and attend school to receive the education they dream of.

Malala Yousafzai was born on July 12, 1997, in Mingora, Pakistan. As a child, she became an advocate for girls' education, which resulted in the Taliban issuing a death threat against her. On October 9, 2012, a gunman shot Malala when she was traveling home from school. She survived, and has continued to speak out on the importance of education. She was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2013. In 2014, she was nominated again and won, becoming the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Although Malala was in critical condition having to be in a coma for at least a week, that did not stop her from fighting for what she believed was right. The lifestyle she was intended to live turned out to be the complete opposite. Instead of serving her father and brothers for a lifetime, she achieved and strived for greater goals.

In the book *"I Am Malala"* by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, Malala shares a part of her childhood. "We all played cricket on the street or rooftops together, but I knew as we got older the girls would be expected to stay inside. We'd be expected to cook and serve our brothers and fathers. While boys and men could roam freely about town, my mother and I could not go out without a male relative to accompany us, even if it was a five-year-old boy!" (Ch.1pg.26) This was the typical Pakistani tradition. Following tradition was something all girls were forced to do. If they broke those traditions, they knew the consequences they had to face. In the Pakistan culture, it dictates that women are born to follow tradition and honor men. Women that oppose are considered dangerous, rebellious, and often immoral, which is why many Pakistani women are subjected to horrifying bestiality and horror crimes. Women are tortured, but the form of torture is not confined to mere slapping, hitting, and kicking. They are shot, vaginally electrocuted, raped or brutally disfigured. Malala's father, Ziauddin Yousafzai let her be anything she wanted to become. Malala decided at a very early age she wouldn't become the typical Pakistan housewife for all her life. If this were to be the path Malala would've taken, she would've sacrificed her way of living now to simply staying at home cooking and serving her father and brothers. The day Malala has children of her own to care for and a husband she'd obey is what will remain for the rest of her life. No accomplishments, just duties to get done. Her father always said, "Malala will be free as a bird" (Ch.1pg26). She broke tradition, fought for what was right, and her father motivated and encouraged her along the way. Though what she fought for ended up getting shot in the face, she recovered and to this day continues to prove the Taliban wrong.

As a child, I was told that if I graduated from college I would become successful. Yet, no one told me about the obstacles I'd be facing along the way. Going to school wasn't a problem at

that time because I always looked forward to learning about new topics, seeing my friends, and playing when it was time for recess. Throughout my elementary years, my mother would scold my siblings and me for watching too much television. She would lecture us on the importance of learning how to speak the English language fluently and tell us to read a book instead. I love reading but it specifically had to be something I was interested in. Weeks later after she had scolded us for watching too much television, my mother canceled cable television and from then on everyone was required to read. My sibling's and I were expected to know our times tables fluently and would be tested by my father. If we'd make a mistake for any reason, we would have to repeat them over again and my father would add a house chore after house chore if we didn't say them correctly.

When I got to the 7th grade I knew I didn't want to continue studying. I just wanted to stay at home, surf the web, and take naps. I didn't want to go to school anymore because it was the same usual routine; get up early in the morning, attend class before 8 a.m., stay at school for up to seven hours, then head back home. I hadn't even reached high school yet and I was already considering dropping out. My mother and father changed that for me. I understood then why my father put so much pressure on me to learn mathematics and my mother for making me read so much. Was I about to throw all that knowledge away? Other students don't have that father or mother to encourage them to do well in school. Either they end up on the streets having no one to guide them towards the right direction or they turn out to become no one in life. My parents told me that if I continued my education I would provide them and myself with much more than what they provided me. I agreed and realized that they were right. With an education, I can aim to get my dream job and if I'm hired I'll make money and therefore give my children what my parents couldn't give me.

I'd say that Malala and I share some similarities that have happened through our lifetime. Malala Yousafzai is only a year older than I am, she was raised by both parents and has siblings she can talk to about anything. We both are striving for that specific goal we have set for ourselves. She has accomplished many goals so far but doesn't settle for less. She has risked her life for many girls deprived of education and those girls now look up to Malala for being such a brave advocate. Nonetheless, Malala's parents were the ones that never gave up on her aspirations. The advocating should've stopped the day Malala got shot in the face. But, that didn't stop Malala and although her parents were worried sick they did nothing but support her ambitions for the future. I'm grateful to have both of my parents supporting me and encouraging me to go further than my boundaries. Malala's story has helped me realize how my parents have helped me throughout my education. By supporting me and always motivating me to do more than can be done.

In conclusion, after reading about Malala Yousafzai memoir, my personal views of education have indeed reshaped my understanding of education. I knew that in some countries girls must obey tradition by not being educated and are only to serve their family and family of their own. I did not know that it only took one girl to speak up for many young girls deprived of education, which resulted in Malala getting shot in the face by the Taliban. She recovered and as soon as she had enough strength to fight back she became advocating worldwide about the importance of girls' education. Malala's story is very inspiring because it reminds me that anything is possible. She had a dream and accomplished that by fighting for what she believed was right with the support of her parents. I use to complain when I was younger how difficult school was but look how far I've come. Completing college and receiving my bachelor's degree is just one step closer to fulfilling my dream of getting a job with the Federal Aviation

Administration to become an Air Traffic Controller. I'm privileged to be in the place I am today.

I must give it to my previous teachers for teaching me so much throughout the years, but most importantly my parents for never giving up on me, always motivating and encouraging me throughout my education. Education is indeed a pathway to a successful life.

Work Cited

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