Aspen Institute seminars help leaders reflect on timeless ideas and values. Through text-based dialogue with expert moderators and accomplished peers, seminar participants enhance their capacities to think more creatively in solving the problems that confront society. Seminar dialogues take place each day of the Resnick Aspen Action Forum.
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Seminar Session 1

Wednesday, July 25
Checking In
For me, trees have always been the most penetrating preachers. I revere them when they live in tribes and families, in forests and groves. And even more I revere them when they stand alone. They are like lonely persons. Not like hermits who have stolen away out of some weakness, but like great, solitary men, like Beethoven and Nietzsche. In their highest boughs the world rustles, their roots rest in infinity; but they do not lose themselves there, they struggle with all the force of their lives for one thing only: to fulfil themselves according to their own laws, to build up their own form, to represent themselves. Nothing is holier, nothing is more exemplary than a beautiful, strong tree. When a tree is cut down and reveals its naked death-wound to the sun, one can read its whole history in the luminous, inscribed disk of its trunk: in the rings of its years, its scars, all the struggle, all the suffering, all the sickness, all the happiness and prosperity stand truly written, the narrow years and the luxurious years, the attacks withstood, the storms endured. And every young farm boy knows that the hardest and noblest wood has the narrowest rings, that high on the mountains and in continuing danger the most indestructible, the strongest, the ideal trees grow.

Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.

A tree says: A kernel is hidden in me, a spark, a thought, I am life from eternal life. The attempt and the risk that the eternal mother took with me is unique, unique the form and veins of my skin, unique the smallest play of leaves in my branches and the smallest scar on my bark. I was made to form and reveal the eternal in my smallest special detail.

A tree says: My strength is trust. I know nothing about my fathers, I know nothing about the thousand children that every year spring out of me. I live out the secret of my seed to the very end, and I care for nothing else. I trust that God is in me. I trust that my labor is holy. Out of this trust I live.

When we are stricken and cannot bear our lives any longer, then a tree has something to say to us: Be still! Be still! Look at me! Life is not easy, life is not difficult. Those are childish thoughts. Let God speak within you, and your thoughts will grow silent. You are anxious because your path leads away from mother and home. But every step and every day lead

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you back again to the mother. Home is neither here nor there. Home is within you, or home is nowhere at all.

A longing to wander tears my heart when I hear trees rustling in the wind at evening. If one listens to them silently for a long time, this longing reveals its kernel, its meaning. It is not so much a matter of escaping from one's suffering, though it may seem to be so. It is a longing for home, for a memory of the mother, for new metaphors for life. It leads home. Every path leads homeward, every step is birth, every step is death, every grave is mother.

So the tree rustles in the evening, when we stand uneasy before our own childish thoughts: Trees have long thoughts, long-breathing and restful, just as they have longer lives than ours. They are wiser than we are, as long as we do not listen to them. But when we have learned how to listen to trees, then the brevity and the quickness and the childlike hastiness of our thoughts achieve an incomparable joy. Whoever has learned how to listen to trees no longer wants to be a tree. He wants to be nothing except what he is. That is home. That is happiness.
Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth,
let's not speak in any language;
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be a fragrant moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden uneasiness.

Fishermen in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused
with total inactivity.
Life is that which you do;
I want nothing to do with death.

If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves

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and of threatening ourselves with death, perhaps the earth can teach us when everything seems dead and then everything was alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve and you keep quiet and I will go.
Ahora contaremos doce
y nos quedamos todos quietos.

Por una vez sobre la tierra
no hablemos en ningún idioma,
por un segundo detengámonos,
no movamos tanto los brazos.

Sería un minuto fragante,
sin prisa, sin locomotoras,
todos estaríamos juntos
en una inquietud instantánea.

Los pescadores del mar frío
no harían daño a las ballenas
y el trabajador de la sal
miraría sus manos rotas.

Los que preparan guerras verdes,
guerras de gas, guerras de fuego,
victorias sin sobrevivientes,
se pondrían un traje puro
y andarían con sus hermanos
por la sombra, sin hacer nada.

No se confunda lo que quiero
con la inacción definitiva:
la vida es sólo lo que se hace,
no quiero nada con la muerte.

Si no pudimos ser unánimes
moviendo tanto nuestras vidas,
tal vez no hacer nada una vez,
tal vez un gran silencio pueda
interrumpir esta tristeza,
este no entendernos jamás
y amenazarnos con la muerte,
tal vez la tierra nos enseñe
cuando todo parece muerto
y luego todo estaba vivo.

Ahora contaré hasta doce
y tú te callas y me voy.
Seminar Session 2

Thursday, July 26

Cultivating Courage

ASPIN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP NETWORK
Where The Mind is Without Fear

By Rabindranath Tagore

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls

Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee

Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

They Want Us To Be Afraid

By Kamand Kajouri

They want us to be afraid. They want us to be afraid of leaving our homes. They want us to barricade our doors and hide our children.

Their aim is to make us fear life itself! They want us to hate. They want us to hate 'the other'. They want us to practice aggression and perfect antagonism.

Their aim is to divide us all! They want us to be inhuman. They want us to throw out our kindness. They want us to bury our love and burn our hope.

Their aim is to take all our light! They think their bricked walls will separate us. They think their damned bombs will defeat us.

They are so ignorant they don't understand that my soul and your soul are old friends. They are so ignorant they don't understand that when they cut you I bleed. They are so ignorant they don’t understand that we will never be afraid, we will never hate and we will never be silent for life is ours!

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1Kojouri, Kamand. They Want Us To Be Afraid. Kamand Kojouri, 2017.
Seminar Session 3

Friday, July 27

Fearlessness in Our Lives
Chapter 5
Finding Allies in Tammany Hall

Witnessing the Triangle fire had galvanized the thirty-one-year-old social worker, and it came at a time when her early idealism had begun fading away. Surveying the political scene in New York, she realized it was naive to expect people to recognize the errors of their ways and hasten to correct social problems. To achieve major change she needed allies, politicians who actually had the power to make things happen. In New York, that meant cultivating Tammany Hall, the shady and corrupt political machine that most upstanding citizens viewed with distaste.

Tammany Hall politicians used favors to win popular support. They passed out shoes to poor children, took impoverished families on boating jaunts, gave food to the hungry, and paid for the funerals of the penniless. They offered help to illiterates who got in trouble with the law. For waves of immigrants arriving indigent and friendless on American shores, Tammany Hall stretched out the only welcoming hand they saw. Recipients of the ring’s largesse were glad to reciprocate with their votes.

Tammany Hall operatives who won public office used it to enrich themselves. Many became immensely wealthy. They took bribes from companies seeking public contracts for city services, sought payback from saloon-keepers trying to retain their liquor licenses, demanded services in kind from brothel-owners, took a cut from the paychecks of civil servants for whom they had gotten jobs. This system meant that the contractors who got the government projects often did substandard work and that many government employees were incompetent or unscrupulous. People who voted for Tammany Hall candidates might get a food basket at Thanksgiving, but they paid for it with bad roads and second-rate schools.

The organization’s tentacles reached everywhere, even into the courts, affecting who got arrested, convicted, or acquitted, because the machine controlled police and judicial appointments.

Frances had first encountered Tammany Hall upon her arrival in New York, when she lived in the settlement house. A social worker who also was living there asked Frances to help a family in distress. A teenage boy, the sole support of his mother and two younger sisters, had been arrested and faced a prison term. His family was running out of food and rent money and risked disintegrating if he went to jail.

She turned first to Devine’s Charity Organization Society, whose officials undertook a lengthy investigation. While the study was under way, Frances and a few friends donated their own meager resources to help the family. After a long while, an agency official told Frances that the inquiry found the woman unworthy of help because one of her children appeared to be illegitimate.

Frances was incensed. Something needed to be done. Putting her reservations aside she turned to a man known as The MacManus, the Tammany Hall leader who ruled Hell’s Kitchen along Ninth Avenue with an iron hand and served as ward boss for the Hartley House neighborhood.

She went to his headquarters. She passed through the portals and found roughnecks, thugs, and hoodlums milling ominously about, smoking and spitting tobacco juice. She asked to be directed to Mr. MacManus, and a clerk waved her inside.

Squaring her shoulders, Frances entered his smoke-filled offices. In his Irish brogue, The MacManus asked why she had come, and she told him it was because of a boy in trouble. MacManus asked if she lived in his district, and Frances gave the street number, without adding that it was Hartley House. She feared that mention of a settlement house would throw him off; she knew Tammany Hall officers disliked the upper-crust reformers active in the settlement houses because they were also usually advocates of good-government reforms.

The MacManus asked a few more questions about the boy’s situation, and then promised he would try to “fix it up.” He asked her to come back the next day. By the next afternoon, the boy had been released from jail.

Frances never knew exactly how The MacManus had done it. He likely called in a favor at the courthouse, perhaps from an unqualified court official who got his job in exchange for a kickback. Still, the experience taught her the valuable lesson that venal politicians can sometimes be more useful than upstanding reformers.

Her encounter with The MacManus marked the beginning of Frances’s long alliance with Tammany Hall. Frances’s perceptions of right and wrong were changing. She began to find key supporters in unlikely corners. Big Tim Sullivan and his brother Christy, state legislators who made their money shaking down contractors, for example, were converted into important allies in her fight to
improve workplace conditions. Some of these men had been troubled by the Triangle fire, as girls who had died in the blaze had been their constituents, and now they were willing to help.

Tammany Hall was at the height of its power. The previous November, voters threw Republicans out of office after numerous bribery and embezzlement scandals. The Democrats took power. In 1911, Tammany Hall, the single largest Democratic political block, controlled both legislative chambers and the governorship. The next year the Republicans took the assembly but the Democrats still held the Senate and the governorship. Tammany Hall effectively controlled not just the city of New York but the entire state, including the state capital, Albany.

Again Frances had to march bravely into a place where other women of her class were reluctant to go. Her lobbying for the National Consumers League took her to Albany at least once a week. The Dutch-founded city had deteriorated into a maze of booze joints, gambling halls, and sleazy rooming houses. Its riverfront was a polluted industrial wasteland. Traveling there took courage, especially since Frances typically stayed in cheap lodging houses to save money for the league. Even stepping inside the palatial capitol building took a certain resolve. Its red carpets were soiled by ash from cigar-smoking legislators, and brown stains marked the spots where tobacco chewers had missed the spittoons. There was hardly a woman in sight, and Frances avoided the lunchroom so she would not be seen as “too bold” by the male diners. Instead she prowled the halls, trying to collar any legislator she could reach.

As Frances began her work there, trying to find ways to advance her agenda, a man named Charles Murphy, a New York City saloon owner, was just taking over the helm of Tammany Hall. Hard-bitten and rough, he nevertheless sensed that the political winds were changing. He installed new leadership in Albany, choosing two promising young men, good friends who became known as the Tammany Twins. Frances made it her business to get to know them, too.

Robert F. Wagner, a German immigrant who had put himself through law school, became president of the Senate. He was Northern European and Protestant, as were most of the social reformers, and they viewed him as the one of the pair most likely to enact government reforms and boost workforce protections.

But Frances was more impressed with the less physically imposing of the duo, the industrious young assemblyman Al Smith, who served briefly as speaker of the house before becoming minority leader. A Catholic of Irish and Italian descent, Smith had grown up in the New York City slums. At fourteen, he had gone to work at the Fulton Fish Market to support his widowed mother, brothers,
and sister. An early convert to Tammany Hall, he was being groomed by Murphy to be the next party leader.

Largely self-educated, with a gravelly accent and bad table manners, Smith pored over the state budget and developed a minute knowledge of individual legislative bills. He was homely, with a big nose and a scrawny neck, but he was diligent and had quick mind. As she had with Sinclair Lewis and Robert Moses, Frances quickly saw qualities in him that other people might have missed.

“Al Smith had turned out to be a fine orator with a command of language, a pungent, racy talk in the language of the people, a gift for the figure of speech that would make people remember things and would also make them laugh at the same time,” she said. “He really was quite extraordinary and if you ever saw him perform on the floor, you’d never forget it.”

In the summer of 1911, a few months after the Triangle fire, Frances met with Smith to update him on the status of the fifty-four-hour workweek bill. She thought she had enough votes to win passage, and was about to take a much-needed vacation. Smith told her to go, but not for the reasons she hoped. It had been decided, he said, that the issue would never come to a vote. He told her that an important Democratic Party campaign donor, the Huyler Candy Company, opposed the legislation and would ensure its defeat. The Bloomingdale retail family also opposed it.

Frances didn’t believe him. Many people had assured her that action was imminent. She canceled her trip and spent the next weeks in Albany waiting for the bill to come up for a vote. It never did. She went back to the drawing board.

Now Frances targeted the Huyler family for what she called a “campaign of education.” She enlisted help from wealthy and influential supporters of the National Consumers League, and before long members of the Huyler family found themselves greeted and entertained by the likes of industrialist and philanthropist R. Fulton Cutting, the great-nephew of steamship inventor Robert Fulton, and Virginia Potter, daughter of prominent New York cleric Henry Codman Potter. On a separate front, she arranged for the Bloomingdale family, who were Jewish, to be personally contacted on the issue by influential rabbi Stephen Wise.

In the spring of 1912, Tammany Hall leader Murphy gave the nod for the bill to be considered again. It passed easily in the Senate but hit a roadblock in the Assembly, after lobbyists for the canning industry sought an exemption. Eventually the measure passed—but the women who worked some of the longest hours in the state had been purposely excluded. The exception made the bill unpalatable to the National Consumers League and other social organizations. In short, the Assembly had passed the reform measure in a way that its main backers
considered unacceptable. If the House and Senate could not find an acceptable compromise version, the bill would die.

Frances agonized for twenty-four hours. She discussed the problem with league lawyers and supporters. Board member Pauline Goldmark visited her in Albany to strengthen Frances’s resolve to reject the unacceptable bill.

Frances discussed it with Smith and The MacManus, who both said little. Finally Tim Sullivan leveled with her. He said that Tammany leader Murphy had issued orders to pass the legislation in that particular form, so that the reformers would reject it.

“They don’t mean to put it through,” Sullivan told her bluntly.

Boiling with anger and frustration, Frances realized she’d been tricked. Then Joe Hammitt, another advocacy group lobbyist, helped her to reach a decision.

“How many women are there working in canneries?” he asked.

“How many women are there working in manufacturing in New York State?” he asked.

“About four hundred thousand,” she replied.

“If I were you, I’d do what I could for the four hundred thousand,” he said.

Frances walked into the corridor, taking refuge behind a curtain to consider her options. She decided she would accept the amendment and do some good for the four hundred thousand women who would otherwise not get the benefit of the bill. But while she pondered, the Senate rejected the Assembly’s version of the bill, with even ardent supporters saying they had done so at the reformers’ own request.

Frances again turned to Sullivan. With only hours remaining in the session, she told him she would accept half a loaf. Again he tipped her off: The legislators had set up the procedure to make it impossible for another vote to be called. And Wagner, the reformers’ ostensible friend, had given orders as Senate presiding officer to block anyone seeking reconsideration.

“Oh, Mr. Sullivan!” Frances cried.

Sullivan paused, and then decided to help her.

“Me sister was a poor girl and she went out to work when she was young,” Sullivan confided. “I feel kinda sorry for them poor girls that work the way you say they work. I’d like to do them a good turn. I’d like to do you a good turn.”

Sullivan and a group of Republican progressives who supported the bill rushed into the chamber, demanding reconsideration. Pandemonium erupted. Wagner turned pale and then stammered that it was too late to change the rule.
But Sullivan, acting chairman of the rules committee, was able to demand a vote. Supporters of the fifty-four-hour bill, who had been told to reject the amended version with the exception, ran to Frances, who was standing behind a brass rail at the chamber’s edge. They asked her if she really wanted them to support it. Nervous but holding her ground, she told them she had decided it was preferable to win a better life for some than to deny it to all.

Standing next to Frances, Pauline Goldmark, a coworker at the National Consumers League, pulled at her coat and objected vehemently, reminding Frances she had been instructed not to allow the cannery workers to be excluded. “Pauline,” Frances said, “this is my responsibility. I’ll do it and hang for it if necessary.”

While Sullivan and Frances blocked Wagner’s maneuvers, Frances noticed that some key supporters had already left to catch the boat back to New York City. She called the boat’s captain and asked him to hold the ship.

The legislators straggled back into the chamber to cast their votes. McManus and others killed time with long-winded speeches, allowing more supporters time to return. Finally the bill passed, 27 to 16. The galleries burst into applause.

Wagner sulked; Al Smith laughed and praised Frances’s pluck. Victory in hand, Frances headed back to New York City. Goldmark was still angry. But when Florence Kelley heard the news, she grabbed Frances and hugged her, jubilant at her success.

Still the carping continued. Josephine Goldmark, Pauline’s sister, pointedly noted the law’s shortcomings in a 1912 league report. Goldmark hailed the passage of a fifty-four-hour workweek for women but chided Frances for striking a deal. “Unfortunately, in the effort to secure this great benefit for tens of thousands of factory workers, the luckless women employed in the canneries were sacrificed,” she wrote.

Outside this narrow circle of impractical perfectionists, however, the legislation was viewed as a triumph for Frances. The next year, the law was broadened to include the canneries.

Frances had achieved what a decade of reform efforts had failed to accomplish. Tammany Hall leader Charles Murphy later conceded to Frances that though he had opposed the measure, he knew it was politically popular. He was reconsidering what Tammany’s stance on workplace issues should be, and he had decided to stop blocking progressive legislation. Smith and Wagner also began to change their tack. For the first time, Tammany Hall began aligning itself with social reformers.
Around that time, Frances, born into a rock-ribbed Republican family that despised Tammany Hall Democrats, decided that if women ever got the vote, hers would be Democratic. Her childhood jibe had become true conviction. She announced her change in allegiance at a party at her apartment—drawing jeers from her friends, who said she would be aligning herself with “the scum of the earth.”

“All I know is this,” Frances told them. “When the Republicans are in power in this state, we don’t get any social legislation at all. The bills and things I’m interested in make no progress at all. When the Democrats are in power, we make some progress.”

“You’d vote for Tammany?” they asked in horror.

“They vote for our legislation,” Frances said.

Nonetheless, Frances remained wary of Tammany Hall, knowing the machine could also be vicious. In 1912, William Sulzer, a Tammany Hall man with a checkered record, was elected New York’s governor and, once in office, struck out on his own, seeking to pursue an agenda of good-government reforms. Murphy, feeling betrayed by his own creature, responded with fury and initiated an inquiry into Sulzer’s past, which turned up numerous instances of ethical lapses and missing money. Under orders from Murphy, the Tammany-controlled state legislature impeached Sulzer, in one of the few cases of full impeachment in U.S. history. Ten months after his election, Sulzer was driven from office. Al Smith and Robert Wagner helped manage the impeachment campaign. A purist might have viewed Smith’s political attack on Sulzer as hypocritical, unprincipled, and evidence of a profound lack of independence from the dictates of Tammany Hall. Frances, however, was becoming increasingly practical. She took Smith’s actions as a cautionary example, not as grounds for ending the friendship.

Her ability to accept human foibles, to see both failings and strengths, was becoming a core personality trait, bolstering her effectiveness. She found that making deals with imperfect people and focusing on their strengths provided a pathway to actually achieving social change.

Watching the impeachment spectacle, another revelation ended up shaping her in an even more important way. The impeachment debate took place in the hottest part of the summer, near the session’s end, and Frances had stayed in the capital to fight for her fifty-four-hour bill. The impeachment decision had made legislators agitated; the mood in the building was edgy; everyone knew the skirmish had more to do with politics than ethics.

As Frances stood outside a capitol elevator one day, the doors opened and a group of worried men came out in a cluster and dispersed into the hallways. Frances greeted state senator Hugh Frawley, a crude little man in a checkerboard-
print suit. She knew him only slightly, so she was shocked when he grabbed her hand and told her how badly he felt about what was taking place. Frawley poured out confidential details of the legislators’ negotiations with Sulzer, how he and others had begged him to “just drop all this business.” Sulzer had refused, sticking, belatedly in life, to his principles.

Frances unsuccessfully tried to comfort Frawley. He let out a long sigh. “Every man’s got a mother, you know,” he moaned.

At first, Frances found the exchange amusing and repeated it to her friends. As Frances thought more about it, however, she realized he had trusted her with secrets because she was a woman. He had granted her insider status. She learned from the brief exchange that the way men were able to accept women in politics was to associate them with motherhood.

“They know and respect their mothers—ninety-nine percent of them do,” she explained.

She began to see that her gender, a liability in many ways, could actually be an asset. To accentuate this opportunity to gain influence, she began to dress and comport herself in a way that reminded men of their mothers, rather than doing what women usually like to do, which is making themselves more physically attractive to men. She even kept notes on her exchanges with men, including revealing letters that she found humorous, and placed them in a red envelope that she kept with her. She called these observations “Notes on the Male Mind.”

The transition to the somber black dress, the pearls, the matronly demeanor were subtly picked up in the press reports. Before that summer, the media had characterized her as perky, pretty, or even dimpled. Her friends had called her fun-loving and praised her kite-flying; her students at Ferry Hall had thought she was fashionable. Now she looked and dressed like a sedate middle-aged mother. Thanks to the new look, some reporters called her Mother Perkins, a nickname she hated, or even worse, Ma Perkins, which she despised. But it was indeed the persona she had chosen to adopt—at least in public.

She was thirty-three years old.
Nobel Lecture
By Malala Yousafzai

Bismillah hir rahman ir rahim.
In the name of God, the most merciful, the most beneficent.

Your Majesties, Your royal highnesses, distinguished members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee,

Dear sisters and brothers, today is a day of great happiness for me. I am humbled that the Nobel Committee has selected me for this precious award.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support and love. Thank you for the letters and cards that I still receive from all around the world. Your kind and encouraging words strengthens and inspires me.

I would like to thank my parents for their unconditional love. Thank you to my father for not clipping my wings and for letting me fly. Thank you to my mother for inspiring me to be patient and to always speak the truth - which we strongly believe is the true message of Islam. And also thank you to all my wonderful teachers, who inspired me to believe in myself and be brave.

I am proud, well in fact, I am very proud to be the first Pashtun, the first Pakistani, and the youngest person to receive this award. Along with that, along with that, I am pretty certain that I am also the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize who still fights with her younger brothers. I want there to be peace everywhere, but my brothers and I are still working on that.

I am also honoured to receive this award together with Kailash Satyarthi, who has been a champion for children’s rights for a long time. Twice as long, in fact, than I have been alive. I am proud that we can work together, we can work together and show the world that an Indian and a Pakistani, they can work together and achieve their goals of children’s rights.

Dear brothers and sisters, I was named after the inspirational Malalai of Maiwand who is the Pashtun Joan of Arc. The word Malala means grief stricken", sad", but in order to lend some happiness to it, my grandfather would always call me Malala - The happiest girl in

the world" and today I am very happy that we are together fighting for an important cause.

This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change.

I am here to stand up for their rights, to raise their voice... it is not time to pity them. It is not time to pity them. It is time to take action so it becomes the last time, the last time, so it becomes the last time that we see a child deprived of education.

I have found that people describe me in many different ways.

Some people call me the girl who was shot by the Taliban.

And some, the girl who fought for her rights.

Some people, call me a "Nobel Laureate" now.

However, my brothers still call me that annoying bossy sister. As far as I know, I am just a committed and even stubborn person who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants to see women having equal rights and who wants peace in every corner of the world.

Education is one of the blessings of life—and one of its necessities. That has been my experience during the 17 years of my life. In my paradise home, Swat, I always loved learning and discovering new things. I remember when my friends and I would decorate our hands with henna on special occasions. And instead of drawing flowers and patterns we would paint our hands with mathematical formulas and equations.

We had a thirst for education, we had a thirst for education because our future was right there in that classroom. We would sit and learn and read together. We loved to wear neat and tidy school uniforms and we would sit there with big dreams in our eyes. We wanted to make our parents proud and prove that we could also excel in our studies and achieve those goals, which some people think only boys can.

But things did not remain the same. When I was in Swat, which was a place of tourism and beauty, suddenly changed into a place of terrorism. I was just ten that more than 400 schools were destroyed. Women were flogged. People were killed. And our beautiful dreams turned into nightmares.

Education went from being a right to being a crime.

Girls were stopped from going to school.
When my world suddenly changed, my priorities changed too.

I had two options. One was to remain silent and wait to be killed. And the second was to speak up and then be killed.

I chose the second one. I decided to speak up.

We could not just stand by and see those injustices of the terrorists denying our rights, ruthlessly killing people and misusing the name of Islam. We decided to raise our voice and tell them: Have you not learnt, have you not learnt that in the Holy Quran Allah says: if you kill one person it is as if you kill the whole humanity?

Do you not know that Mohammad, peace be upon him, the prophet of mercy, he says, do not harm yourself or others".

And do you not know that the very first word of the Holy Quran is the word Iqra", which means read"?

The terrorists tried to stop us and attacked me and my friends who are here today, on our school bus in 2012, but neither their ideas nor their bullets could win.

We survived. And since that day, our voices have grown louder and louder.

I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not.

It is the story of many girls.

Today, I tell their stories too. I have brought with me some of my sisters from Pakistan, from Nigeria and from Syria, who share this story. My brave sisters Shazia and Kainat who were also shot that day on our school bus. But they have not stopped learning. And my brave sister Kainat Soomro who went through severe abuse and extreme violence, even her brother was killed, but she did not succumb.

Also my sisters here, whom I have met during my Malala Fund campaign. My 16-year-old courageous sister, Mezon from Syria, who now lives in Jordan as refugee and goes from tent to tent encouraging girls and boys to learn. And my sister Amina, from the North of Nigeria, where Boko Haram threatens, and stops girls and even kidnaps girls, just for wanting to go to school.

Though I appear as one girl, though I appear as one girl, one person, who is 5 foot 2 inches tall, if you include my high heels. (It means I am 5 foot only) I am not a lone voice, I am not a lone voice, I am many.
I am Malala. But I am also Shazia.

I am Kainat.

I am Kainat Soomro.

I am Mezon.

I am Amina. I am those 66 million girls who are deprived of education. And today I am not raising my voice, it is the voice of those 66 million girls.

Sometimes people like to ask me why should girls go to school, why is it important for them. But I think the more important question is why shouldn’t they, why shouldn’t they have this right to go to school.

Dear sisters and brothers, today, in half of the world, we see rapid progress and development. However, there are many countries where millions still suffer from the very old problems of war, poverty, and injustice.

We still see conflicts in which innocent people lose their lives and children become orphans. We see many people becoming refugees in Syria, Gaza and Iraq. In Afghanistan, we see families being killed in suicide attacks and bomb blasts.

Many children in Africa do not have access to education because of poverty. And as I said, we still see, we still see girls who have no freedom to go to school in the north of Nigeria.

Many children in countries like Pakistan and India, as Kailash Satyarthi mentioned, many children, especially in India and Pakistan are deprived of their right to education because of social taboos, or they have been forced into child marriage or into child labour.

One of my very good school friends, the same age as me, who had always been a bold and confident girl, dreamed of becoming a doctor. But her dream remained a dream. At the age of 12, she was forced to get married. And then soon she had a son, she had a child when she herself was still a child – only 14. I know that she could have been a very good doctor. But she couldn’t … because she was a girl.

Her story is why I dedicate the Nobel Peace Prize money to the Malala Fund, to help give girls quality education, everywhere, anywhere in the world and to raise their voices. The first place this funding will go to is where my heart is, to build schools in Pakistan—especially in my home of Swat and Shangla.
In my own village, there is still no secondary school for girls. And it is my wish and my commitment, and now my challenge to build one so that my friends and my sisters can go there to school and get quality education and to get this opportunity to fulfil their dreams.

This is where I will begin, but it is not where I will stop. I will continue this fight until I see every child, every child in school.

dear brothers and sisters, great people, who brought change, like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and Aung San Suu Kyi, once stood here on this stage. I hope the steps that Kailash Satyarthi and I have taken so far and will take on this journey will also bring change - lasting change.

My great hope is that this will be the last time, this will be the last time we must fight for education. Let's solve this once and for all.

We have already taken many steps. Now it is time to take a leap. It is not time to tell the world leaders to realize how important education is - they already know it - their own children are in good schools. Now it is time to call them to take action for the rest of the world's children.

We ask the world leaders to unite and make education their top priority.

Fifteen years ago, the world leaders decided on a set of global goals, the Millennium Development Goals. In the years that have followed, we have seen some progress. The number of children out of school has been halved, as Kailash Satyarthi said. However, the world focused only on primary education, and progress did not reach everyone.

In year 2015, representatives from all around the world will meet in the United Nations to set the next set of goals, the Sustainable Development Goals. This will set the world's ambition for the next generations.

The world can no longer accept, the world can no longer accept that basic education is enough. Why do leaders accept that for children in developing countries, only basic literacy is sufficient, when their own children do homework in Algebra, Mathematics, Science and Physics?

Leaders must seize this opportunity to guarantee a free, quality, primary and secondary education for every child.

Some will say this is impractical, or too expensive, or too hard. Or maybe even impossible. But it is time the world thinks bigger.
Dear sisters and brothers, the so-called world of adults may understand it, but we children don't. Why is it that countries which we call strong are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace? Why is it that giving guns is so easy but giving books is so hard? Why is it, why is it that making tanks is so easy, but building schools is so hard?

We are living in the modern age and we believe that nothing is impossible. We have reached the moon 45 years ago and maybe will soon land on Mars. Then, in this 21st century, we must be able to give every child quality education.

Dear sisters and brothers, dear fellow children, we must work... not wait. Not just the politicians and the world leaders, we all need to contribute. Me. You. We. It is our duty.

Let us become the first generation to decide to be the last, let us become the first generation that decides to be the last that sees empty classrooms, lost childhoods, and wasted potentials.

Let this be the last time that a girl or a boy spends their childhood in a factory.

Let this be the last time that a girl is forced into early child marriage.

Let this be the last time that a child loses life in war.

Let this be the last time that we see a child out of school.

Let this end with us.

Let's begin this ending... together... today... right here, right now. Let's begin this ending now.

Thank you so much.
Seminar Session 4

Saturday, July 28

Where Do We Go From Here?
Not Here

By Jalal al-Din Rumi

There’s courage involved if you want to become truth. There is a broken-open place in a lover. Where are those qualities of bravery and sharp compassion in this group? What’s the use of old and frozen thought? I want a howling hurt. This is not a treasury where gold is stored; this is for copper.

We alchemists look for talent that can heat up and change. Lukewarm won’t do. Halfhearted holding back, well-enough getting by? Not here.

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For a New Beginning

By John O'Donohue

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the gray promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life’s desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

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