

## Changing Ourselves

(Original)

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*(Age 17, Brazil)*

I was 8 and was going to my school as usual, everything seemed normal, but that day would change me forever. I studied in a public school in my neighborhood, where studied young from the lowest social classes, and in my classroom there were students up to 14 years old. That day the teacher would give the exams' results and I was very excited, not because of my grades but because I have helped two colleagues to prepare for those exams. The first one was that kind of 'problematic' girl, who was always making a mess and calling bad names. And the other one was a thirteen years old pregnant girl that still couldn't read. When the teacher arrived and gave the results I almost didn't believe, they couldn't have been better.

Nothing could match the joy of seeing their faces of happiness. I felt so proud of them and also of myself for had helped them, even a little, to believe in themselves. I cannot remember anymore which were their names or their faces with clarity, but I remember how this had affected me and changed my mind. I realized that if I could help those girls I could do much more to change the reality of people around me.

I have never stopped thinking about this and I have tried to find ways of changing all the problems of my community. But my country has too many problems as bad public health and education, violence, poverty and corruption. The neediest people from my country, as those girls, do not have the chance of having a better life, they are constantly discouraged to fight for their dreams because of the bad conditions they have to live with.

By the time I was worried about my people and doing my best to become someone that could do the difference in the future I discovered the most essential thing for everything I wanted to do. And I could start to put it in practice just at that time. And this thing is empathy. Empathy has the power to move the world; it can create compassion, cooperation, union and love. To put yourself in others shoes and help him changes both and create a cycle of changed people by the kindness and regard.

The rise of technology was able to transform the life of the society and it has brought us

innumerable benefits, yet the misuse of it has made us lose extremely important things. The Internet, which should be used to improve and intensify the communication, ended up superseding the face-to-face conversation in the life of many people, leaving back factors as spontaneity, emotion and truly. The people forgot how to live the real life and this made them be more selfish and careless. And in my country, a place in development with several issues, this effect is becoming even worse. It is pretty common see homeless people asking for food in the streets being totally ignored or situations where someone take advantage of others in Brazil.

I believed that if we could make people have more empathy things would start to be different, the people would join and care about others and then the problems like bad public health and education and violence and corruption could be easily solved. People need people. When they united they are stronger and they can change everything.

Therefore, while I am preparing myself and planning my next step to contribute with my community, I am trying every day to inspire people to be more kind and to help others. And there is no better way to do it than being like this myself.

I am now a volunteer in an ONG that support needy children and I plan to intensify my work there and use it as a link to attract more people to do the same.

Accordingly, try to wake up at morning and think a bit about your neighbor or the doorman of your building or maybe think about that person that is alone in the street, think kindly about others and try to do something good for someone. I am certain you will be making the difference.