

2022 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – 2nd Prize]

My Values are My Life

(Original)

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February 24, 2022. Kharkiv, Ukraine. I wake up to explosions at about 4 a.m. I go to my parents' room and ask, "Did you hear that? What's going on?" And in response, I hear, "Yes, the war has started."

The parents of my classmates started writing that their child wasn't going to school, they weren't going to work, and were leaving town altogether. It was in the moment that I wondered a lot. Was it that bad? It was horrible... When you have to urgently evacuate your city. When you can't celebrate in two days the birthday of the dearest person in your life that you've been preparing for all last year. When all your family and friends call and ask, "Are you alive?"

I never thought that in the 21st century, I would go to the basement not to look at my grandmother's cucumbers and tomatoes, but to hide in a basement.

While arriving at the safe house, I wanted to abstract myself from it. Close my eyes and ears. Imagine it was just a dream. At the moment, a world-famous quote came to me. "Appreciate what you have." Before that, everything seemed ordinary, somewhere boring, not lively, an everyday routine. What are my values after that?

My values are life. I began to cherish it more, to treasure it. You realize that this day could be your last. You don't know where the next missile or bomb or plane will land. Life is moments, good and bright or bad and not safe. Even when you're in the basement, you're with your parents. They support, help you believe in the best, hope, and just wait.

If you think about it and remember what it was like. Going to school in the morning, coming

back and doing homework, going to the gym with your mom, going for a walk with your friend's dog. Going to laugh, be happy, or cry over a bad grade. These are all moments in life that are especially precious. We don't remember them for long, but when we do, it makes us feel alive.

To appreciate, to love, to rejoice. Life is a gift. If you understand that, your path, your life, flows in the best way possible.

You can't foresee today or tomorrow or what will happen in a week. But you can build that future. My values create my future.