

The World In Which I Want to Create

By Olivia R. Bakal

Life for a kid is supposed to be carefree. My biggest worries are supposed to be pimples and first crushes; at least that is how it is in the books I read and the movies I watch. But the reality is that I am growing up in a world where I worry about the well-being of humankind and the sustainability of our planet. I understand that the world isn't perfect. However, I do believe in everyone's ability to create better versions of themselves. Together, we can create a better version of our world: a world that is based on mutual respect, a world that controls access to guns in our communities, and a world that protects our planet for future generations. I want to create a world where no one is mistreated, guns are extremely hard to purchase, and climate change is no more.

"No human race is superior; no religious faith is inferior. All collective judgments are wrong. Only racists make them." This quote by author, activist, and Holocaust survivor Elie Weisel resonates with me because I am Jewish; often I'm not seen as part of a marginalized group because I am also white. But make no mistake about it—Jews have been persecuted since the beginning of time. From the great Exodus from Egypt (the story of Passover), to Nazi Germany (where Jews weren't just seen as a different religion, they were seen as a different race), Jews have been treated unfairly. Sadly, racism and hate extends to many minority groups. I want to create a world in which individuals are committed to celebrating and educating themselves about other cultures, races, and religions; if people were willing to fight back against discrimination and hate, we would all hopefully experience love instead of hate. Different cultures and religions all have unique traditions, so learning about others can be very beneficial in expanding one's view. In my home, we have an open door policy; anyone who wants to join us for Passover, Shabbat, Yom Kippur, etc. is always welcome, no matter what their religion or culture is. In the world in which we live, some groups of people are cherished and honored; others are mistreated. No one should ever feel lesser than. Everyone should always be celebrated for who they are and where they come from. Discrimination exists because of ignorance. If more people in the world were willing to teach themselves about others, then the world would be free of much hatred.

I want to create a world that is not only free of hate, but one where access to guns is extremely limited. Firearm regulation is the set of laws that regulates the retail sale, production, ownership, and usage of firearms. Even though some states have firearm regulations, it's still not impossible to purchase a gun. Lots of people get shot and killed every year, and one big example of this was at the recent shooting in Uvalde, Texas. An 18 year old fatally shot and killed 19 students and two teachers at Robb Elementary School on May 24, 2022. The gun laws in Texas are some of the most lenient in the country. Some stores even have signs that say, "Guns Are Welcome." I

don't think that when our Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution and gave citizens the right to bear arms in the 2nd amendment, they meant for an 18 year old kid to be able to walk into a store and buy an assault rifle. If all states had firearm regulations, there would be far less fear and far fewer senseless deaths. This would make our planet a better place because it would help human populations continue to grow and make room for everyone to fit in.

The last thing I would create the world in which I will best fit ould be to stop and reverse climate change. Climate change is slowly but continuously getting worse, and we have no one but ourselves to blame. Humans are polluting thEarth with gasses like carbon dioxide and methane. The way the Earth warms up is that the sun sends energy to the Earth's surface. Some of the energy is absorbed, and some of it gets redirected back into the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide and methane are gasses that trap heat instead of letting it escape into the solar system, and this process produces climate change that takes a massive toll on our planet. Climate change melts ice caps, causes sea levels to rise, and forces coastal cities to flood. Natural weather occurrences like hurricanes and severe storms will start to happen more frequently. We have to create permanent sustainability practices before we cause irreversible destruction to our planet. Stopping climate change in its tracks will only happen when we all work together to make drastic changes like using solar energy, water conservation, reducing waste, eating less meat, and reducing carbon emissions.

In the end, the world in which I will best fit, the world that I want to create, is one where every person is accepted and celebrated for who they are, regardless of skin color, religion, or gender. It is a world where there are state and Federal laws that make access to guns incredibly difficult. It is a world where sustainability is a way of life, not a topic open for debate. I want to use my voice and take action now by protesting gun violence, helping reduce carbon emissions, and just being my true self. If I wait until I'm older, then it will be too late. I realize that I can't run for President until I'm 35, but if I don't act now to help save future generations, I will be guilty of handing off a worse version of our already scary world to my children. James Baldwin once said, "The place in which I'll fit will not exist until I make it." I'm excited and ready to create *that* place now.