

In a speech to the United Nations last year, the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, then aged 15, said that "We can't change the world by playing by the rules."

**The essay question:** Does breaking the rules change the world?

Changing the world. What does it mean to change the world? Does it have to be something big, something irrevocable or can you argue that just by being alive every second we are in fact, all no changing the world. Who gets to decide? Because if I were in charge, I would say that everyone being here is changing the world in one way or another.

Breaking rules. I tend to colour inside the lines; I stay inside the box but does that mean I can't change the world? Some say rules are set in stone whereas others say rules are made to be broken. I never break the rules if I think there will be a permanent, negative change. Inspirational leaders such as Malala, Greta Thunburg and Martin Luther King Jr didn't just break the rules, they completely annihilated them. Does the fact that I can't do that make me weak? I guess what I am trying to ask is can we just change the world by playing by the rules?

So, does breaking the rules change the world?

Well yes. Yes, of course it does. But by how much? Well the problem is, I don't know. This statement, please forgive me, is boring. It is not specific enough to catalyse the creation of any opinions in my brain. Breaking the rules can change the world or it can not. Breaking the rules can make you a hero, a martyr or a stereotype- a faceless crime statistic. Breaking the rules is a risk that so many have taken over the years but who has benefitted from it?

When I say breaking the rules, what comes to mind? You think of the suffragettes- a universally recognised symbol of female empowerment - you think of Rosa Parks- a figurehead for the civil rights movement- you think of Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, Gandhi, Malala and so many other people who did undeniably change the world. You know who you don't think of- you don't think of Jeremy, age 32, struggling to find paid work because he was recently released from prison for fighting a police officer who said he was 'black scum'. You don't see Sarah, age 25, who just got fired for slapping her boss when he tried to sexually assault her. Were these people breaking rules for moral good? Yes. But this tactic does not work for everyone. Not everyone can fight the law and walk out unscathed.

I am a young black woman. I personally identify as multi-racial- half black, half white- but in the eyes of society I am a young black woman. This really changes the playing field for me. I do not have privilege. I am doubly-marginalized by the colour of my skin and my genitals. That is all it is. The amount of melanin I have and the gender I was assigned at birth. Again, I have come to terms with that but the problem is society will always view me as less than. I am less than my white friends and I am less than my male friends. Don't even get me started on my

white male friends but the thing is I am not. I am not worth any less, I am just not as valued.

That is not the problem, the problem is I'm scared.

I am scared that one day me being me is going to have consequences I am not mentally prepared to deal with. Just walking down the street when it gets dark, I am constantly looking for any nearby police so that they can tell me they want to search my bag because they don't trust me. I am scared that other people's naive, closed-mindedness will blind them. I am scared that one day I'll put one foot out of line and the whole sky will come crashing down on me.

Does that make me weak, too weak to change the world?

You know, I don't think so. I think that some people are able to take risks fully accepting the consequences. I think some people value their cause above their life but me...maybe I'm selfish or maybe I'm just scared.

This will not come as a surprise to anyone, but society is not equal. There is an explicit hierarchy that crushes us all. The land we walk on is not even, the starting points we all started at are not the same. This will not come as a surprise to you, but some people have privilege. Some people can get away with anything whereas others have people breathing down their necks watching their every move.

Take Boris Johnson for example. The leader of our country put there by a good 0.13% of our British population. We have our British values, we have our democracy but where is it? This man, this wannabe dictator suspended parliament. He rejected the mere concept of democracy. You know what the Supreme Court ruled? 'Unlawful'. He went and did it anyway because some people see themselves as above rules and get away with it because quite frankly, they are.

Now, let's take a look at the apparent leader of the free world. Donald J Trump. A perfect example of modern day politics. He is racist, homophobic and sexist. He respects no one yet expects respect from everyone else and the thing that makes me angry is, he gets it. Trump has broken so many rules but he doesn't have to deal with the consequences. You know why? Because he is a white male authority figure. What are people going to do to him?

Both Trump and Johnson have been accused of sexual harassment by many women. They are disgusting individuals but we let them rule our countries. So many people like them rule our countries. The (x amount of people) in Alabama had complete control over women's bodies when they banned abortion. The cycle of patriarchy and white supremacy is repeating and it will continue to repeat until we do something about it.

Doing something about it is how we could change the world.

People break the rules by murdering, raping, stealing- intentionally causing pain to others. Personally, I don't want to go down in history as somebody associated with those people under the 'law breakers' umbrella.