

## Education is Might

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When presented with the word “weapon,” most minds conjure images of guns, of knives and of bombs—of wretched, venomous forces. And when asked to list different weapons, a plethora of varying violent devices is often brought to mind. But where in this litany of weapons, lays education, the most vital of all weaponry? It is forgotten because education, unlike most weapons, does no harm. This is a paradoxical truth. Education is a weapon against ignorance, against parochialism and bigotry. It is a weapon exceedingly overlooked in its capability to impact the world indelibly through the procurement of knowledge, rather than through force and brutality.

The realization that education combats ignorance unlike any other weapon is an empowering force. Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani schoolgirl who was shot by the Taliban when she demanded schooling for all girls, is a voice calling for higher attainment of knowledge, her words reverberating throughout the world. Even after the Taliban threatened her by putting a bullet in her head, Mala Yousafzai continues to advocate advancement of education, compassionately asserting that even if “there was a gun in [her] hand and the [the Talib stood] in front of her, [she] would not shoot him.” Instead, she would fight back “through peace and through dialogue and through education.” Even after her oppressors succumbed to force in efforts to quell her vocalism for education, Yousafzai still insists that education supersedes all other weaponry in the world. Only through education, can the world travel past ignorance and intolerance—wholesomely and peacefully.

Education is a shaping force that is continually molding the world every day. The presence of educators and the existence of picture books that teach children kindness and compassion is enough to change the world. Even at an early age, children in primary school are taught to how to forgive, how to share, how to put aside differences gracefully. They are taught to accept people no matter what race, religion, or culture they belong to. Amongst these seemingly fruitless nudges toward world peace given by schoolteachers and books, there lies a bigger picture. Only education can spark compassion and acceptance of differences among people. Every pencil, every book, every teacher holds the power of shaping the young minds of future generations. Rather than allowing evil to brew and metastasize, education can transform evil into benevolence.

Ultimately, education is an intangible force that can felt in every aspect of human life. It keeps us humble, motivated, curious, and hungry to learn more, to see more of the world other than of which we come from. The brilliance in education lies within its ability to permeate every corner of the earth to improve the world in which we live. It breeds scrupulousness and human compassion, allowing us to embrace the unknown and the different rather than fear what we do not yet understand.