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is a tenth grader at Brush High School in Lyndhurst. She describes herself as an overachiever and is very active in school. Alexis is on the cheerleading squad, sings and dances in show choir, and is in the school musical.

The first time I read the paper for this contest, I was interested in the money. I admit it. I was in the mood to win something. What held me back was that I couldn't decide on a discrimination to use. Religious? Racist? Sexist? What would change the world?

I thought to look again at the quotes. They brought back memories of a narrative by Ellie Wiesel about a face in the window. The boy being sent to a concentration camp watched this face for days as the face watched the crowd. The face did nothing. It was the face doing nothing that hurt the most.

I remembered sisters and other kids who bullied me. It was humiliation, but I was a child. She'll get over it, she shouldn't take things so seriously they said when I would cry. Why shouldn't I take it seriously if I'm the one abused? Why should I accept it? So I was bitter and mean back. As I grew older I didn't take things as seriously, and learned to laugh instead of cry, but it still hurt.

Yet I was not the only one abused. It happens still. There are the people who are quiet, secluded, and tense when you try to talk to them. It takes them a while to open up. Then someone with less regard will walk up and ask what you are doing with the likes of that quiet person. You see the person almost visibly shut back down. They change, their words bitter. That was me. That still is me. No one did much about it, then or now.

I will.

I read the short story about the face and was angry. I saw that I was the face, and I became mad at myself. It sunk in deep, I was so stupid! I knew what they felt.

So I decided not to be the face. I spoke up. This is the sweetest guitar player in the school, that's why I'm talking to them, do you have a problem with that? Can I make other friends outside of these condescending cliques? Thank you, now leave us be.

I now speak up for the girl who was accidentally pushed. I told the rude guy off in the hallway. This is my plan. I want all the faces out there to slap themselves. Step up. You do not want to remain a face. Don't be the bigger enemy.

My philosophy is based on my experiences, not things I was only witness to. This essay probably won't change the world. It might not win me any prizes, but I don't really care. This is more important than that. I collected all the little things I took seriously and used them to better myself. That is now why I write this essay. This is what the quotes mean. This is what I learned. This is why I am no longer just a face in the window.