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Vera Federman - What Her Story Made Me Realize

Vera Federman's experience/story opened my eyes immensely. She gave me an entirely different view of my generation and the world around me. I hope to have half as much courage when I'm an adult as she did when she was 20 years old. Vera's story showed me how dazed my generation truly is. We live our lives glazed over, we don't try to see the meaning behind anything. We crave attention on an app more than real love.

Vera and her family were deported to Auschwitz in June of 1944, on her 20th birthday. After being imprisoned at the camp for six weeks, one day they had to march naked with their shoes in their hands and were lined up in front of the malicious Dr. Mengele. He was sending them to either side, the left being a line that would leave no survivors. When Vera faced him, he sent her to that line.

Vera didn't flinch. She headed towards the line, but stopped halfway, turned around and spoke up to Mengele. She lied to him, trying to convince him to let her live, saying she was strong and she could work. Vera was courageous enough to defy her own doom, after already being in the camps for some time and knowing what they could and would do to her, she still made an effort to leave that line, to fight for her survival.

This story awakened something in me. I look around, at the news, at my peers, at things going on in front of me, and I see that the world is falling apart. As negative and pessimistic as you think I'm being, it's the truth. Vera's bravery makes me question the way my generation lives. What happened to us?

We all know that we will never be fulfilled from a small portable screen or a comment on a post or a positive reputation that lasts maybe a week, but we keep going back to those things. Why?

Vera had so much courage as to defy her own doom when now students are too afraid to even raise their hand in class. We fear to be wrong, so we don't try anything at all. The majority of kids in my generation don't even want to live their life, while Vera fought for hers, Vera stared death in the eyes for her life.

I know it isn't completely our fault. We are drained, unhappy, depressed, anxious, we have more issues than you can name - but why?

Unfortunately, I think we all know the answer to that question will never really come. Nobody really knows. We are breaking, mentally exhausted, falling apart so extremely that our guardians don't even believe us. However, until we get control of this, of us, of our minds, I want to say thank you.

Thank you to those before us who continue to show it is worth it, there is hope. Thank you, parents, who choose to support and believe your children. Thank you, students and peers, who do the same with friends. Lastly, thank you, Vera, for showing a perfect example of courage and leadership. None of us are alone.