

Keira Purdon

Thunder Bay, ON

This Is My Voice; Listen

I am Keira Purdon and this is my voice.

In kindergarten I was pushed to the ground and called a loser.

This is my voice.

In second grade I was harassed by an autistic child. In this year I was punished for defending myself in a fist fight.

This is my voice.

In fourth grade I was called fat.

And this is my voice.

In fifth grade I lost a very close friend.

In sixth grade sexual remarks were made at my expense.

This is my voice.

Last year I realized my potential and decided to use it.

This is my voice.

And this year, this year I stand up here as scared as I will ever be when I jump my horse over a three foot fence. And this is my voice.

It is the journey through almost fourteen years that has made this sound.

I stand here so you all can hear what I have to say, so that some part of the world however small it may be, will hear my words.

This is my voice.

I want my voice to be heard not because I am white, or do well at school, or because I am in the English division, or because I live in a democracy. I want my voice to be heard because I am a woman and because I want it to be heard.

So listen all of you. Listen those who are affected by racism, white or black, African or Aboriginal. Listen all those who see themselves as ugly or fat. Listen to those who know what it's like to wake up in the morning and dread facing what's outside your door. Listen because you are not alone.

This is my voice.

I'm not saying I understand what people in war torn countries or countries without a stable government go through because I don't. I hope I never will. I never want to close my eyes wondering if my mother is going to get shot or if I might never wake. No one should know that fear. But I would have them listen.

This is my voice.

Listen to my voice, my words no matter who you are. Listen regardless of religion. I don't care if you're from Jamaica, I don't care if you are Muslim or Catholic. Listen to all those who need to be accepted.

This is my voice.

We all have stories some more horrific than others. But I tell you to listen to mine, hear with more than your ears. Drink in how I am not so different than any of you. See with your soul that we are all uniquely the same. Believe with your heart that we can believe.

Hear me! Listen to me because I demand to be heard. I will tell this to all, French or English, white or black, Chinese or Latin, Muslim or Christian, gay or straight. If I am standing up here saying I accept those differences, why can't you? I am just like you, no better.

So listen to me!

I am Keira Purdon and this truly is my voice.