

## Laima- Choices from the Heart

I was sexually attacked and I became a victim of sexual discrimination in early med school. I had to choose to be a victim or a victor. My second cousin **Rehtaeh Parsons** had to make her choice. I write this to remember my beautiful cousin friend and to maybe make a change in a society that could allow the loss of such a beautiful sensitive soul.

**Rehtaeh Parsons** died this April 2013 in Canada. She hanged herself. Rehtaeh was raped by four of her high school classmates who shared photos which got her shunned and humiliated. The police took over ten months to even interview the accused. The Police decided there was no evidence to pursue prosecution. They just walked away.

Rehtaeh's father said "*She wasn't bullied to death...she was disappointed to death, by people she trusted. She believed in fairness and social contract that are supposed to protect us and seek justice on our behalf, but so often fail victims of rape and all other kinds of sexual violence and abuse of power and instead heap further shame and re-victimization on those who are vulnerable. (Especially to female in mind or body) Especially when "boys will be boys" kinds of attitudes are brought in to justify the kind of systemic failure that led her to believe the world wasn't a place she could live in anymore.*" She choose to leave this world to escape the shameful words of internet fools.

But this isn't about Rehtaeh, it is about choice. The fact that to many of us – men and women – her story is all ways familiar. Maybe private, maybe no, maybe you choose to be a victim; maybe you choose to fight against the shame. This is just a horror we'd like not to see happen to anyone again. But CNN's Steubenville apology for Amanda Todd who died less than seven months ago is not enough. We're receiving the message that this isn't going to just go away unless we DO something. Inside we choose to remain victim or to become a victor. Do we or do we not give in to internet bullying?

We live in the strangest of times. Everyone gets to express a public opinion behind their keyboard and 700 conduits to share it on and I for one do not welcome our new Bedlam insanity system. Even the rumors of my non-existence have been greatly exaggerated.

But there are tensions of ideas growing in the mist that is starting to pervade a great many of the conversations I happen on. There is an idea that people can say anything and get away with it. There is also the idea that women critiquing men is oppressive and equates to bigotry. And some women critique what they do not know a bit too much.

(“Note: a generation of anti-racist education in North America seems to have succeeded in making the word ‘racist’ an offensive thing to call somebody, while utterly failing to actually educate a vast swath of the citizenry about what racism, um, IS.”)

Then the Rehtaeh Parsons story came. It is most heartbreaking. Women AND men are very sad and mad and want to make change and want to chat about it.

But if, god forbid, their dialogue gets emotional or spurs to generalize fear, hate and anger, even in a culture where 90% of rape victims are female and 99% of perpetrators male, there is frequently a descent into accusations of “*reverse sexism*” and bigotry.

***“You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”***

Let me clarify. Generalizations – predominantly about girls and sexuality – are at the core of the unequal power relations that not only allow young women to be gang raped at parties without intervention but to be further victimized after by both peers, friends, Facebook and the rebuff of the authorities – the legitimate authorities, even the educational authorities – who fail to dignify her violation with real actions.

I think all of us have the potential to play a productive role in conversations about equality and sexism...whatever our gender. I absolutely believe that.

But the real situation, the core is the choice we make personally after such a crisis, whether it happened to us or to others. We choose to be a victim or we choose to be a victor. The internal choice of who we are determines which direction we grow in.

I choose to become a writer and to track down medical frauds and all other negative hurtful businesses operating askew of moral principle. I am not a victim, I am a victor and if this message stops just one more girl like Rehtaeh from staying a victim, then this message is worthwhile.

My being a victim led me to choose to be a victor. I am on a mission to help people increase awareness on many things. I chose a positive path, I hope you will.

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# Laima on a mission



By Laima Jonusiene, **MD**

*We live in a fast paced world where immediate results are yearned for. If we are sick, we want to have a prescription within hours and medicine to cure our symptoms in a day or so. We do not care about the cause of a disease. We want the symptoms to go away. But is this Health Care??? Do we have a choice of natural versus synthetic drugs????*

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All over the world citizens are endlessly relying on the power of medicine. We all want to make sure our loved ones are healthy, and decline to believe that modern medicine could actually harm them. And the authorities sometimes do not do their job as well and this is just as harmful.



Rehtaeh the world misses you. I miss you