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## Answering Rachel's challenge

An inspiring story of a girl who wanted to make a difference in the world

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On April 20, 1999, Rachel Joy Scott, a 17 year-old student at Columbine High School, was the first of 13 people who were killed during the worst high school shooting in America.

Her death, while apparently like any other death, made an impact that has sparked change within millions of people.

While she was alive, Rachel was like any other teenager, except that she had these thoughts about herself: she believed that she would impact the world. She had a diary that she kept with all of her hopes and dreams, reminiscent of that of one of her idols, Anne Frank.

Rachel spent her time helping with kind thoughts those around her who were mistreated, bullied and abused. She befriended a boy by standing between him and a bully, willing to go into a fight with the bully if he laid one more hand on the boy.

Rachel knew she would die that day. She accepted that fact as nothing new or special; she treated it the same as she treated her dream to impact the world or as what she did at school or as the fact that the sky is blue.

She lived an amazing life and despite having this feeling that she would die young, she still treated every day as if it was her last, showing everyone the love and respect that mattered so much.

After her death and a series of other events, Rachel's father decided to fulfill her dream of impacting the world by founding Rachel's Challenge, a program dedicated to living her philosophy. Rachel's father and brother, along with others influenced by Rachel's actions, go to middle schools, high schools and colleges, retelling Rachel's life story and message.

On Monday, Rachel's Challenge came to SMU to talk to fellow students. Judging by the overall feeling in the theater, it seems everyone was moved by her actions.

The eeriness of the coincidences of Rachel's life created this idea that the actions of the two men responsible for the murder of 12 students and one teacher were foretold by some powerful being or force in the universe in order to bring about a greater good overall.

Rachel should not have died that day, because she brought about so much good in the world. Why would anyone want to hurt someone as sweet and innocent as she was?

I had actually heard Rachel's Challenge once before, in high school. I accepted her challenge to start a chain reaction of kindness, to remove prejudice, to set goals and to love others.

Ever since the first time I saw Rachel's Challenge, my life has never been the same. I do more, I love more and I live more. I feel like I am a totally different person since accepting the challenge. I believe that I have the chance to make a difference in someone else's life.

I, like Rachel, want to make a lasting impact on my world.

Seeing Rachel's Challenge again not only made me remember why I decided to become the man I am now, but it also re-inspired me to treat others with the same respect that I wish to receive and to show compassion towards my fellow man. I only wish that others could have come out and heard Rachel's story.

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If anything I said interests you, check out [rachelschallenge.org](http://rachelschallenge.org) to find out more and see how you can accept Rachel's Challenge.

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