

Together we are one!! Every night on the news or any social media platform you see something about violence. Families are tired of losing their loved ones. Something has to change.

I have never experienced violence, but the way I have seen my friends change because of it has always made a huge impact on my life. To begin with, the first time I saw one of my friends change was when Marcos Orta was shot and killed at the age of 17. Marcos Orta was well known. I remember when we all found out he was dead it was shocking news to everyone. When my friend found out, he cried and cried until the point where he went completely silent wanting to end his life too. He would go to the memorial every day for hours to just sit there and wish for Marcos's appearance to come back. After that day my friend has never been the same. As much as we wanted to help him, getting back up that loss hurt him so much that he went silent. Marcos was like an older brother to my friend, he was the one person who would talk to him when he needed it and clear his head from difficult things going on at home. To this day my friend still sits down and tells me how he wishes maybe, just maybe, he could hug Marcos one last time. He even shared with me one of his terrible moments, there are times he could be in his room and suddenly smell the cologne Marcos would use daily. It's sad to see someone you care about slowly starting to lose themselves and always being so different because they had someone close to them pass away. The case of Marcos Orta, it's ONE in a million. There are so many cases that have happened such as the Robb Elementary School shooting, 21 victims were shot and KILLED. In another case, at Galena Park stepfather Valdez Saldana murdered two of his daughters and one of his

daughter's friends, he sexually assaulted his 12-year-old daughter who thankfully got to escape with her 1-year-old baby sister. This is THREE of many other cases out there. We NEED to make changes for these problems to stop increasing day by day as soon as possible. Marcos Orta was a loving son and a great friend. He was like a sibling to many people. He never had problems with anybody. Marcos was a senior, in his last year of high school before starting his life. He didn't deceive to get shot and killed at such a young age.

There are so many causes that cause youth violence. Grabbing a gun or a knife won't make anything better for anyone no matter how desperate for attention you can be. Some parents say it's not their problem when they are being asked about youth violence, what does that teach their kids? Some people may feel unheard or unseen but over time they will do things to be seen and not in a positive way. Those families didn't deserve to lose a loved one. These victims did not deserve to get killed. They didn't do anything, they didn't owe anything to anybody. They were souls! Their life changed in split seconds. Now everyone is always with that fear to go out because of all the things that have happened in their community. Youth Violence to people who have never experienced anything and don't pay attention to anything around them may think it is not a big deal. Youth violence is like a cat in a box, if you put a cat in a box the cat won't know how to get out of that space. Now imagine that in a human, if a person loses a loved one so many thoughts would build up in their head and they won't know how to get out and speak about their problems to people. Anything to do with violence will always affect you in any type of way. Nobody deserves to lose a loved one. No friend deserves to lose a friend. These situations could be handled in many different ways, for

example, parents should give their kids the confidence to go to them when they feel like they are starting to lose themselves.

Youth Violence is so bad, we are losing many different people. As a person I want everyone to be safe and enjoy life because life could be so short for some people. I want to start talking to individuals who may feel lost. A small talk could make a difference to someone else. Always. Not only my help but also educate some parents that sometimes who they think their child is, does not compare how they act when they are not around. There are some parents that have given so much to their kids but never sat down and got to know them or asked about how they are doing. Everyone can do something to make a difference. Social Media is our biggest platform, we went from newspapers and letters to phones and even created our highest technology. Why not use this technology to open eyes to some people? We have Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and Facebook. These are very successful apps that could be used to bring out why violence needs to be stopped. We can make posters and put them all over our community. Talk to those in need, as well as comfort them even if you don't get along with someone if you see them struggling and you are in a good position to help please help them. Talk to them I know sometimes we don't want to talk to people because we think to ourselves "that's not our problem" and we are totally right that is not our problem but if we want to make a change then we should start caring about other people other than ourselves.

We live in a strange generation, it may seem hard but it's not impossible to make a change. We need to make a change for the better of us and the people around us. I

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want to say a huge thank you to every parent or person that has talked to someone else about this topic, or that has seen this happen and stayed strong.