

Not about the man. About the way of thinking about the world.

I have two children: a 7-year-old daughter named Stella and a 4-year-old son named Truman.

Dear children,

I'm writing this letter to you about something that you can not yet fully understand. In fact, it is hard for many grownups to even understand what I am writing about. But in time, I know you will understand this letter and it will become clear to you why I have written it.

This letter is about Donald Trump.

I know you have heard me talk about Donald Trump. And you may have even seen Donald Trump, the man, on television. But you see the Donald Trump that I'm writing you about is not really a man at all. Donald Trump is something entirely different indeed. **Donald Trump is a way of thinking about the world.**

Being Donald Trump means that you are afraid. That you are afraid of people who are not like you. You are afraid that those people will take what you have. Or what you feel should be yours. And that fear makes you hate those people. All of those people. You are not sure why, but you hate them. And you take away those people's names and you take away their stories. And you hate them. And you keep them away.

Donald Trump means believing that you are stronger if you are bigger or angrier or you have more violence than the other people. If you try to listen to or hear the other people, you are weak. And you will lose. You will lose at the game. You are not sure what the game is, but you know that if you are weak or ugly or fat you will lose at the game and you will be a loser. But if you are strong or you have more money or you can punch those people in the face, you will win at the game.

Donald Trump means believing that if you are a boy it is better than being a girl. And being a boy will surely help you win at the game. But being a pretty girl is much, much better than being an ugly or a fat girl. If you are a fat girl or you look different from the pretty girls, you are ugly... and that is not good. But it is always best to be a strong boy who has lots of money. Because money is the most important part of the game. And you want to win at the game.

Donald Trump also means that you don't need to be right about something to say it or even to believe it. You just need to say it. You need to say it loudly and many times and you need to believe that it is right and then it will be right. Even if it is not right.

You see my children, there are many people who like Donald Trump. And these people want Donald Trump to be America, the place where you live and are growing. And if Donald Trump is America, and that is the place where you live and grow, then you may also one day become Donald Trump. And that is why I am writing this letter. Because I am worried about Donald Trump, and I am worried about you becoming Donald Trump.

Stella, I can recall with rare clarity the very first sound you made in this world. I sobbed. I could not contain it. It was a sound like no other I had experienced or have since. With that first sound of protest, you had made me a papa.

The next day, your mother and I brought you home to our Connecticut apartment above the coffee shop. It was the 4th of July and you were being kept awake by the popping of fireworks in the summer street and by the man singing Frank Sinatra at the fair outside of our window. But it was all as it should have been and we were very happy.

Now you are seven. You are smart, full of wit and skeptical of most everything. But most of all you are kind. Bravely, tremendously kind. You care about people's names. And you care about people's stories. And I have been witness to this.

My daughter, you are not Donald Trump.

Truman, when your mother and I first saw you we knew our family was complete. You made us whole. We brought you home to our house, the same one that we live in now, and the children from the street came to you and they held you and have loved you since.

Now you are four. My sweet California boy with golden hair and a tender heart. You feel everything. Deeply. But I have seen strength in the sensitivity of your youth. You will care about people's names. And you will care about people's stories. And I have been witness to this.

My son, you are not Donald Trump.

You see my children, Donald Trump is not a new way of thinking about the world. Donald Trump has come before by different names and he will come again, by new names, when you are grown.

But the good news is that I believe with all my heart that becoming Donald Trump or not becoming Donald Trump, is a choice. Your choice.

But it is not an easy choice.

One day, my little ones, you will come to realize that you are privileged children. You live in a house with a green yard. You do not feel fear when you play in the street or walk to the park. You have never witnessed true violence. You do not want for food or clothes or any basic thing. You have a mother and father who love you. Who love each other because of you and in spite of you. And even the color of your skin, still and unfortunately, affords you an unspoken privilege that is not afforded to others in this place where you are living and growing. Your entire world is safe, full of love and full of privilege. Your stories are happy stories.

But as you grow, this will be a difficult thing for you to come to terms with. At first, you will fight against the idea that you are privileged. You may feel that it makes your stories

less real or less interesting. But after a time, you will come to understand it and maybe even to accept it.

And this, my dear ones, is why your choice will be difficult.

Because privilege can make the lines of your choice blurry. It can make it difficult for you to recognize Donald Trump. Privilege can make you stop hearing people's names and caring about their stories. Privilege can make you afraid. Afraid that people will take what is yours or what you feel should be yours. And children, you can let your privilege make you afraid. Or you can let your privilege make your world bigger. You can use it to make this place where you are living and growing better. By hearing as many different stories as you can. And remembering as many names as you can.

And then when your Donald Trump comes, you will recognize him. And you will remember that your papa knows you. And he has been witness to your kindness. And he knows that you care about names and stories and that you are not afraid. And you will remember this and you will not become Donald Trump.

And that is when it will become clear why I have written this letter.

One final thing to remember my children is that we must never hate the people who are becoming Donald Trump. We must remember that they have names and that they have stories of their own. And that perhaps the reason that they are becoming Donald Trump is because of their stories. Perhaps they are afraid that people will come and take what is theirs, or what they believe is theirs. And we must remember that no matter if it is true or not, that is a very scary thought indeed. And perhaps if we can listen and we can hear the people who are becoming Donald Trump we can learn something for ourselves and we can learn something about the place where you live and are growing. Something that will make our world bigger. And this place better.

And perhaps, if these people have not yet fully become Donald Trump, they may be able to hear us and read this letter and they might know, like you now know, why I do not want you to become Donald Trump.

