

In many societies and cultures around the world, girls are devalued, and as a consequence, education for them isn't a priority. These conditions can place enormous limitations on their hopes and dreams. Their stories often are not those they would write for themselves, but are written for them by society. A pivotal moment in my life which inspired the work I am passionately devoted to—encouraging everyone to 'write their own story'—was in the summer of 2017 when I visited the Pardada Pardadi school for girls in India. One afternoon, I encouraged the girls to go home and write what they believed about themselves and who they wanted to be. I was amazed by what they shared. They wrote about themselves in a way that highlighted their resilience, determination, and remarkable ambition, despite their circumstances. I especially recall how one girl said that her family saw her as merely a weight to bear, but she still believed she could become anything she put her mind and heart to. This very special place, the Pardada Pardadi School for Girls had nurtured them, and inspired them to 'write their own stories.' It helped me to believe that I, too, could inspire others to write their own story. I developed an activity, 'What is your story?' which uses a story mandala inspired by my visit to India to help explore our own stories and develop empathy for others.

Alysia Dempsey, Founder Inspires

My Pivotal Moment Interviewed by Lena Shareef Senior Producer
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