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Dear Society,

Hello, I am a 21-year-old college freshman who has a lot to say. I am writing today to speak about a problem that many people like me face daily. I know you are probably wondering what I could talk about, but don't worry I will explain. I am stronger than I look. I, and many others like me, are stronger than we look. Sympathy and pity are issues that most in my community face constantly, the reason being that we are victims. What exactly are victims? Are we a means of collecting pity every time we mention our problems? Did we ask for you to feel sorry for us and treat us differently? No, we didn't and we never will.

As we all know, a victim is a person who is harmed, injured, or killed by others' vicious intentions. Yes, we are broken, but we didn't ask for your sorrow or your regret that you couldn't help us. Having to live with the brand victim plastered over our heads everywhere we go is not something we seek when building up the courage to speak up. Because of this, many people are tight-lipped and isolated. Personally, it's like living in pitch black where everything you see and hear is your negative emotions waiting for a chance to swallow you whole. It's dark and cold, it hurts and we want to get out which is why many people come out by telling others their worries.

Not to be pitied but to get away from what's holding us back. To stop ourselves from eating more of the cake that is called depression.

The feeling of being suffocated as you enter the room. The sight of eyes that watch you as you walk by. These two sentences are not even enough to explain what being labeled feels like. In Mary Wollstonecraft's letter, she states "Manners and morals are so closely related that they have often been confused with one another". This is mostly done because society has its way of dealing with things. We see victims as poor souls who need 24-7 protection and love to the point it becomes tiring. Where in reality we just need support and time to grow and build ourselves back up again. We need to change this one-sided way of pushing our beliefs onto others and expecting them to just take it. It is cruel and unfair to the ones who are on the receiving end.

Yes, I am a victim but that does not define me. Please don't shower us with pity that most of the time is not needed. Stella young states "They're not doing anything out of the ordinary." Meaning exactly as it says we are not doing anything special. Yes, in Stella young's cause it is directed to the disabled but it can also prove useful to us victims. We broke out, we escaped, and we grew stronger. There is no need for you to feel bad for us because we don't feel bad for ourselves. It wasn't our fault, and that is why we could move forward and speak about it. We are proud of what we have become and won't have it any other way. Please, I beg of you to put yourselves in our shoes. How would you feel if every time you go to a new doctor and they find out you are a victim and then treat you completely different?

As a sexual abuse victim, I have had my share of pain and doubt in my life. Having to deal with all the problems of a broken family, and a broken mind isn't easy. I am not saying my pain is worse than others but I say that I've had enough of people treating me like I'm fragile. I

am not glass. I don't break at the slightest things. I am not a machine that malfunctions and needs a mechanic. I am a human who falls and bleeds. I don't need others to patch up my cut. I, myself, can get up and tend to my wounds and scars. I am capable we are capable so, thank you but no thanks.

Society grows every day, so along with society, we as humans should know when and where it is the right time to throw in sympathy and pity. These feeling that we so kindly give out at the sight of something or someone weaker than us is like a handful of candy on Halloween. We don't know whether the person receiving it likes it but we are giving because that is the "right thing to do". What exactly Is this the right thing to do? Think I am doing the right thing? How would I feel? Ask yourself these questions the next time you decide to throw your pity towards others. Then maybe you too would understand the reason I am writing this letter.

Sincerely,

Shemika Semple