

# OVERCOMING THE MONSTER: CONQUERING OUR FEARS

## VIDEO ONE

Nights filled with artillery fire had become the norm in Swat Valley. Afternoon picnics were a thing of the past. Even the four walls of home no longer felt safe or secure.

Girls like Malala asked, "How long will I be able to keep attending school?"

The rise of the Taliban in Pakistan brought an imminent threat. Amidst the violence and danger, schools awaited the enforcement of a ban on girls' education.

Yet Malala continued to attend.

Her father was a teacher. His dream for his growing daughter was to see her "fly like a bird."

Such was her spirit that, at just 11 years old, Malala began to pen a diary for the BBC under another name. As she typed away on a laptop in her home, it was the beginning of her fighting back against the towering force of the Taliban.

Like her father, Malala longed for girls to have equal access to education. If she could let the world know... if she could get her story out... then perhaps she could make a wave big enough to take down the oppressive regime. To give girls like her an education and a future.

It wasn't long before her courage drew unwanted attention and placed Malala in grave danger.

Speaking out against restrictions made her a symbol of hope. But it also made her a target. The more Malala raised her voice, the greater the threat to her life.

One day, on her bus home from school, a masked gunman stepped on board. He asked for Malala, and fired shots into her head and her neck. The attack shocked the world and led to an outpouring of support for Malala and her cause.

Miraculously the bullet caused no damage to her brain. Rushed to a hospital in Birmingham, here in the UK, Malala received lifesaving treatment.

As she recovered, Malala's resolve was renewed. She'd always imagined that her schooling would take place in Pakistan. That was no longer safe, but Malala was determined to use the precious education she was now receiving in Britain.

From her new family home, she began to use her voice again. Refusing to bow to the oppressive opposition she'd faced, she continued to speak up for girls across the globe. It led her to become the youngest person to be awarded the Nobel Peace prize.

The opposition she faced didn't silence her. If anything it grew her platform.

Malala still receives threats and challenges now but her monstrous experiences haven't silenced her. If anything, they have grown her resolve.

The greater risk would have been to remain silent.

To not have spoken out would have given power to ruthlessness and extremism. It would have left Malala and others like her to be forced to live in the shadows.

A lone voice, from a young and vulnerable girl. Yet not only has she overcome the monstrous threats that towered over her, but Malala has brought change for countless others girls across the world.