

PRACTICES OF LIFE

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I thought, in that moment: I was right. This is what I wanted to do with my life. I was at a Hillary Clinton rally several weeks ago at Ohio State University when it settled, totally and completely, into my dreams and my aspirations. This was where I thrived: surrounded by passionate cries in response to guarantees of universal health care, federal college loans for students, and removing the troops from Iraq. It was the beginning of a story that I wanted to write, maybe, someday as a journalist. It was a story that might end up taking America to heights it has never reached before.

But would Hillary Clinton become the first female president of the United States? That seemed to be the hot topic on the news and among reporters covering the election. Yet it's far from the most important topic, and entirely less debatable than another question: if she were elected president, would things really begin to change for the better? Would it, in fact, be a story worth covering? So many times presidential candidates make false promises, saying they will do something and never following through. At the rally, it became clear to me that I also wanted to be someone who delivered.

I was able to think about promises and products, philosophy and activism, and ideals and realities in a different way. What at first seems like a subtle difference has the most blatant differentiation. A philosophy is a value, a belief, or a viewpoint, while an action can be defined as an accomplishment or an achievement. This is exactly what makes a philosopher different from an activist: a philosopher has an idea, but an activist takes that idea and makes it a reality.

With great enthusiasm we support a candidate who pledges to make fitting changes in the areas of our lives we think need altered. And in our fervor, we rush to support a contender who provides hope and inspires us, the one who makes us believe the transformation of our country is possible. We trust them, more or less, because we *want* to trust them; we *want* to believe what they are saying. When will we stop listening to speeches and start looking at what a candidate has *done* before we focus on what they plan to do?

From this experience, I have gained awareness of the kind of person I want to be: someone who follows through and stays true to her word. I want to be the kind of person who leaves a legacy based on actions - not words. Most importantly, I don't want to have laws of life. I want to have *practices* of life and exercise the same values I have attained from my experiences, my role models (like Hillary Clinton), and those individuals who have made an imprint on history by taking action to promote something in which they believed.