



We are finally getting ready to close the door to the final chapter of the Jerry Sandusky story. Except that's just it, it's not his story, it never has been. It's the story of the countless number of victims that he abused, the ones that came forward and the ones that did not. It's the story of all child abuse victims everywhere, it's our story. It's a story that isn't really ending; that is never really over. That's something we need to remember. When Jerry Sandusky is long gone from the public eye and the public conscious, the horror of what he did will continue to be repeated by some other perpetrator to some other victim or victims. It is up to us, the public, to be the eyes and ears of our children. It is up to us to not forget what happened and to step up to the plate so that what happened at Penn State doesn't happen again. It is up to us to never forget.

This is not an editorial about Jerry Sandusky. Frankly, the man isn't worth my time. He, like my own abuser, isn't someone I like to think about and I certainly don't want to give him any more value or credit than acknowledging that they are both in fact child molesters. This was something I was very lucky to have taught to me right away at an early age. I came forward with my abuse at the age of 11 years and right from the beginning my mother made it very clear that the focus was going to be on getting me "better", on getting me back to being a normal 11 year old girl. We simply weren't going to think about "that man" and we weren't going to wish for revenge or anything else. I look back at how wise my mother was, and I have no idea how she knew how to do it. As a result I focused on myself, and I did in fact get "better". I eventually became a two time Olympian, a three time Olympic medalist and I am now the National Spokesperson for the National Children's Advocacy Center. I bring this up not to brag, but because this is what needs to happen with the Penn State story.

We don't need to focus on Jerry Sandusky. We need to focus on the victims, on what we as a society can do to get "better". How can the victims themselves in this particular situation find the help they need to get better? How can victims everywhere find help? How can we prevent having victims in the first place? What can we do to prevent child sexual abuse? As a society we need to rally around our victims/survivors, and show them the support they deserve so that they can begin the healing process. Sexual abuse is a horrible thing but it is not life ending. You can come back from this, you can be successful, and most importantly, you can survive. We as a society can survive, even Penn State can survive.

Jerry Sandusky doesn't deserve to win; he's not worth it. He didn't care about his victims, and I don't care about him. We shouldn't care about him. We need to support those that he hurt, we need to embrace the mistakes we made so that we don't make them again. We need to implement policies in our youth serving organizations to actually protect our youth. We need to accept that we should all be mandatory reporters. We need to hold each other accountable. I think we can step up to the plate and protect and help each other. I look back at my mother and at my family and how they stepped up to the plate when I needed them. I think about the services I received at the National Children's Advocacy Center, and I think how they all supported me; and, then I look at where I am in my life today. There is a direct correlation there. If society can make that same correlation then I think we have a lot to look forward to and a lot of success in our country's future. Step up and speak out on behalf of children!