Case Notes

# Case Study 0.1

**A Girl Takes on the Taliban (and World Leaders)**

**Case Synopsis and Analysis**

In 2012, Malala Yousafzai was shot in the head by the Taliban after she spoke on behalf of girls’ education in rural Pakistan. She recovered but still suffers from partial paralysis and loss of hearing in one ear. The shooting rallied support from around the world. Malala spoke before the United Nations and became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. She and her father founded the Malala Fund, which promotes 12 years of free education for all children, particularly girls. The fund supports projects in Afghanistan, Brazil, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey and helped secure a $2.9 billion commitment for girls’ education from the countries making up the G7. Malala has been critical of the United Nations for only promoting elementary and middle school education. She told President Obama to stop drone warfare and to invest in education instead. Malala returned to Pakistan from England 6 years after she was shot but received a mixed reception.

**Learning Objectives**

* Students will analyze the reasons for Malala’s success as a child education advocate.
* Students will identify examples of significant leaders who were made, not born.
* Students will evaluate the goal of universal 12-year education.

**Discussion Guide**

Malala Yousafzai demonstrates that leadership isn’t limited to those with a privileged background or an official organizational position. Her intelligence, courage, communication skills, and family support helped her emerge as a leading spokesperson for childhood education. However, point out that there was no guarantee that she would ever gain international notoriety. Solicit other examples of influential leaders, like Barack Obama, who came from humble circumstances. As a group, speculate as to why Yousafzai has the courage to speak boldly to world leaders. See if students believe that she is a more effective advocate because she started as a child. Conclude by debating the merits of Malala’s goal of universal 12-year education. While worthy, some in the group might argue that such an objective is unrealistic and that the UN is more likely to have success with its more modest proposal of universal education through elementary and middle school.

# Case Study 1.1

**Keeping Harvey Weinstein’s Dark Secrets**

**Case Synopsis and Analysis**

Powerful Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, founder of Miramax and Weinstein pictures, used his wealth and influence to silence women who accused him of sexual harassment and abuse. Some victims signed nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) where, in return for cash payouts, they agreed not to discuss their cases. In other instances, Weinstein hired private security firms to dig up dirt about his accusers. Journalists and prosecutors helped Weinstein keep his dark secrets by failing to pursue stories and criminal charges. After his abuses came to light in *The* *New York Times* and *The* *New Yorker* articles, Weinstein was removed from his company and was indicted for criminal sexual misconduct and rape. Gwynith Paltrow, Angelina Jolie, Ashley Judd, and Rose McGowan report that Weinstein forced them into sexual encounters in return for movie roles.

California and New York legislators introduced bills banning nondisclosure agreements, though some victims’ advocates fear that banning them will keep women who don’t want publicity from coming forward. The Weinstein scandal may mark the beginning of a dramatic change in the film industry, which has tolerated sexual misbehavior in the past.

**Learning Objectives**

* Students will analyze the relationship between power and the cover up of abuse.
* Students will develop strategies for keeping superstars and other powerful individuals from covering up their actions.
* Students will determine their responsibility for empowering the unethical and illegal behavior of entertainment figures.

**Discussion Guide**

This case demonstrates that power leads to abuse while, at the same time, power and privilege enable leaders to cover up their abuse. Brainstorm ways that consumers and followers can keep superstars from misusing their power and hiding their actions. Ask students their opinion of nondisclosure agreements and of whether the Weinstein scandal means that sexual abuse will no longer be tolerated in Hollywood. (The Weinstein scandal helped spark the broader #MeToo movement that addresses sexual abuse in all segments of society.) End by considering the question of whether we should stop supporting entertainers who are sexual harassers or predators. Bring in other examples, such as Michael Jackson and R. Kelly, who have also been accused of sexual abuse. Discussing this question should make students (and instructors) more aware of their ethical responsibility as entertainment consumers.