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# The Power of Music

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Becky Snelson

I believe in music. I believe in music's way to transcend whatever borders, barriers, walls, or inhibitions that either we physically or mentally put up around ourselves. I've seen how it can cure the sick and brokenhearted. I believe that it allows us to embody the people who we really want to be deep down. I believe that with music, as corny as it sounds, anything is possible.

I've grown up around music. My father was by no means a professional pianist, but he played often and piano often sounded throughout the house. On my mother's side of the family was a long line of violinists who either played professionally on the radio or dabbled for the sake of playing the instrument. Between the two of them I found music – following my mom's side on the violin – and it has become as much a part of me as eating, sleeping, and breathing.

I've seen firsthand how music became the most valuable part of cancer treatment in my father. By simply coming together as a family and playing simple hymns and carols and a quartet at Christmastime, he kept fighting the disease that was fighting so hard against him. I've seen music give hope and happiness to sick and injured veterans who have been all but forgotten at a small VA hospital in rural New Jersey. The light in their eyes and the tears – whether they are of joy or sadness I'll never know – in their eyes is enough to solidify my faith in music. I've also seen how music transcends national bounds better than even the savviest of politicians. I watched a concert that the New York Philharmonic played in North Korea, a nation that America has locked horns with for many years, and was given renewed hope in diplomacy. This formerly closed nation had opened its doors for Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, and the playing of both national anthems. Little else that I can name can ease out political stress as effectively as music.

Music also allows us to take risks. It gives us the freedom to express our deepest thoughts, even those which we may not feel comfortable sharing in a conversational setting. It allows us to take risks in a way that we would never expect. Music allows us to experience something that may be love masquerading as dedication and without the exit wounds.

To me, it doesn't matter what genre you are listening to. Whether it is classical, rap, rock, r&b, or hip hop, it is all the same principle. Music will take you to a place that you have never been before, you just have to let it. This I believe.