

## TEXT 2

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# The Issues of Youth Censorship

### Transcript:

When I was in grade six, one of our final assignments in English class was to create a *TED Talk*. We were to choose a topic that was important to us and share it with the rest of our class.

I had recently made the switch to veganism and thought this was the perfect opportunity to educate my classmates on something that I was passionate about. From the start I was asked to keep it mild and not too graphic<sup>1</sup>, which I agreed to.

We were about a week away from presentation day when my mom got an email from the teacher saying that I was no longer allowed to present my talk in front of my classmates and my only other option was to do it in front of the teachers. My teacher said, "I spoke to your mom about the fact that the grade six class may not be quite the right audience for the mature substance<sup>2</sup> that you have shared". I'm sorry what? I'm fairly sure that at age 10 we're aware that meat comes from animals. I'm also pretty sure that 10-year-olds know that in order to eat the animal, you have to kill it first. It wasn't like I was explaining in detail *how* the animal was killed. All I was sharing was how killing an animal is never humane no matter how you do it.

The definition of censorship is the suppression<sup>3</sup> of or prohibition<sup>4</sup> of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene<sup>5</sup>, politically unacceptable or a threat to security. There are many different kinds of censorship and not all of them are bad. Censoring mature content from five-year-olds to keep them young and safe can have its benefits but sharing one-sided, biased<sup>6</sup> opinions, not allowing other voices that contradict that biased opinion or shutting out the voices of people who are trying to share an important topic or a different view is a real problem.

I'm not the only kid who's been censored for wanting to share views, facts, ideas, or beliefs. So many kids around the world have been censored maybe for different reasons, but the cause is usually the same. Parental censorship can stem from concerned parents who don't want their kids to grow up with views that are different from their own or parents might simply feel unsure about how to

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<sup>1</sup> (her) detaljeret

<sup>2</sup> *mature substance*: voksent emne

<sup>3</sup> undertrykkelse

<sup>4</sup> forbud

<sup>5</sup> anstødelige

<sup>6</sup> fordomsfulde

25 approach a sensitive topic, so they don't approach it at all. This is usually an attempt to keep the child  
pure or in the line of a certain belief, but can often result in unresolved questions from the child's  
youth or no knowledge about the world that they will grow up in.

30 Censorship in schools usually comes in the form of removal or manipulation of a topic or facts or when  
a sensitive topic is brought forward. Educators feel the need to censor it, kind of like what happened to  
me. An article on school censorship says that the censorship we see in schools usually comes from a  
desire to ensure that our children grow up making the choices and following the beliefs that we desire  
for them by removing any other options but by doing this, we're not allowing the child to grow,  
explore and create their own ideas on the world that they will inherit<sup>7</sup>. If our children continue making  
the choices and following the same beliefs that we desire for them, nothing is ever going to change.

35 But what if instead of censoring an important topic, we encourage a discussion about it? If I was  
allowed to present my talk, it could have opened the doors to a mature conversation. It could have  
been very educational and enlightening<sup>8</sup>, but instead my classmates were left wondering why I wasn't  
allowed to talk about something that I was passionate about. I can't help but wonder what would have  
happened if I was allowed to speak my mind.

40 I was censored for wanting to share information about veganism at school by the teachers. This is a  
pretty small form of censorship and in all honesty, it really isn't that bad, but the question is where  
does it stop? How far are we willing to go to keep a voice silent so that we don't have to feel  
uncomfortable or challenged? Are we really better off just sticking our heads in the sand and ignore...  
and pretending that other views don't exist? I want everyone to ask yourselves how far are you willing  
to go? So where does it stop? Why are we afraid to ask questions? Why are we so afraid to discuss  
things that are controversial<sup>9</sup>? If we can't learn how to be okay with other people having different  
opinions, we could be heading towards a world where we're afraid to speak our minds. We need to  
learn how to be uncomfortable. We need to learn how to listen to other people's opinions even if they  
may contradict our current<sup>10</sup> ones. We're all afraid of what we don't know and that's okay. It's just  
human nature, but it's not okay to silence and censor for the sake of your own comfort.

50 So, parents, be open with your kids. If they want to learn about something, let them learn about it and  
support them. It's okay to be uncomfortable with the topic, but it is not okay to tell them that they  
can't learn, talk or talk about things that they are passionate, questioning or just curious about. Let  
them change the world. Let them discover themselves. Let them learn and the same goes to the  
educators out there as well. Teachers should be helping their students get their voices out and learn  
55 about what they want not shutting them down. Let's learn how to have difficult conversations. I truly  
believe that when we allow and encourage other voices to speak up and when we learn how to  
question our own beliefs, the world will be a better place. [*applause*]

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<sup>7</sup> overtage

<sup>8</sup> oplysende

<sup>9</sup> omdiskuterede

<sup>10</sup> nuværende