

Because I Am a Girl

"I am going to the beach with my classmate," said my little brother in his cheerful tone.

"Forget it! Mom definitely won't allow," I said with confidence, and continued, "Regardless of how many times I had asked her, I was allowed to go anywhere far with my friends only when I was in my 3rd year in university. So forget it, boy! Forget it! You are only in grade 10." I replied with a good feeling. Then my little brother said, "Hey! But I am a boy." Upon hearing this, I suddenly became speechless. This sentence did hit me. How could I forget? He is a boy, and that's why he is different. The truth is he is highly likely allowed to go, and that's simply because he is a boy.



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This is sad but true. Being born as a girl, I realized my rights have been restricted. In Cambodia, girls are such fragile beings, and our lives are so vulnerable that people need to take special care. Of course, there are many things I want to do but I can't because I am a girl, being told not to do this, not to do that. My experience in society is so limited as I am always expected to be at home. In fact, I just want to do things I know I love and I want to enjoy my life as much as a boy does. The way to achieve this is hard, I know, because I am a girl and I am supposed to listen to the elders who believe that girls should stay at home, girls are so fragile and not as capable as boys. Deep down, I dislike this belief; I want to challenge it. And that is what I am trying to do. Now I am restricted from doing many things, but I still strive to do the things I want to do, though little by little. Honestly, I can't let the old belief prevent me from success. Sometimes, even when opinions clash and arguments occur between me and my parents, I still fight to do the things I think are right for me. I want to prove to everyone that I am right in what I am doing by doing the best I can. I know what I am going to do, and what I am not going to do. I want to stand up for what I think is right. And that because I am a girl doesn't necessarily mean I am any bit inferior to a boy. This is my belief.

- Cambodian adolescent (female)