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2023 High School Scholarship Essay Contest  
Third Place Winner (\$2,000 Award)

### **The Power to Change**

**by William Souza**

attending Nevada Union High School in Grass Valley

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

Jane Goodall

The world is an enormous, interconnected web of ideas and interactions. This fact makes it easy to overlook the ways in which we impact the world around us. We may think that our choices and actions are insignificant in the grand scheme of things, but the reality is that everything we do has an impact, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. This is why the quote is so powerful. It tells us that our choices do make a difference. They can also have consequences that reach much farther than some would anticipate, affecting not just ourselves but the people and environment around us. The challenge we face is to become more conscious of our impact and to make intentional choices that align with our values and vision for the world.

One area where one person's choices can have a significant impact is in the realm of sustainability. The world is facing pressing environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, and ocean pollution. While these problems may seem daunting, the reality is that each of us can play a role in addressing them. Whether it's choosing to walk or bike instead of

driving, reducing our energy consumption, or buying products made from sustainable materials, every choice we make can contribute to a more sustainable future.

We can also make an impact through our interactions with others. Whether it's showing kindness to a stranger, volunteering at a local charity, or speaking up against injustice, our actions can inspire others to do the same and contribute to a larger movement for positive change.

Of course, making a difference in the world is not always easy. It can be discouraging to see the scale of the problems facing our planet and society, and it isn't unusual for people to feel helpless or lost when confronted with the reality of our situation. But the truth is that we are more powerful than we realize. Small actions can create a ripple effect of positive change, but when we come together with others who share our vision, the changes we can make are spectacular.

Ultimately, Dr. Goodall's quote challenges us to recognize our agency and power in shaping the world. It reminds us that we are not passive bystanders but active participants, with the ability to choose what kind of impact we want to have. By understanding her idea, we can contribute to a more just, sustainable, and equitable world for ourselves and future generations.