

What comes to your mind when you hear news about ongoing wars around the world? You might think of tragic images of suffering and destruction. However, these are often just distant and vague pictures that we create based on our little knowledge of wars. Yet, who can blame our ignorance? We live in such a peaceful country. But should we let this reality excuse our inaction? Indeed, we must ask ourselves: what can we do to engage with and help resolve these political conflicts? The answer to this question lies in the “power of imagination.”

In 2021, I moved here to Japan from Poland. Just a year later, the Russo-Ukrainian War started. The war immediately became tragic and took more than 30,000 lives of innocent civilians. As someone who lived in a country next to Ukraine, I felt a shivering threat.

My teacher in Poland who accepts children from Ukraine, told me heartbreaking facts about the school I used to attend every day. He said, “Momo, do you remember your classroom? Every day, a child is informed of their father’s death on the battlefield. Every day, there are funerals. But what is worse than this? When there are funerals every day, people begin to feel numb, and the rituals become meaningless.”

I could not believe such a dreadful thing is happening in the classroom I used to walk into every morning. The shock ran through me like electricity and I could not speak for a moment. What would help ease the suffering of these people?

I wanted to do something, but I do not have money to donate or start a big project. However, I realized one thing. I have been doing contemporary dance for almost my whole life, how about using it to express the cruelty of the war and raise awareness? Art is a powerful tool to inspire imagination. So, I immediately formed my plan.

The voice of my teacher in Poland was used in the background music. I asked him what I can do for the children who lost their fathers. He told me to simply think of every child. Think about them for a year, a few years, even after 10 years.

I practiced day and night. It was a special moment. Even if I didn’t actually experience the war, my imagination inspired me to move. I imagined the children. I imagined the people. I imagined what they were feeling, and I danced to it.

I brought my dance work to a National Competition stage, and I finished 6th place. After that, many people said that they could really imagine the sadness and pain of war.

I happened to be from Poland and that gave me an opportunity to realize the importance of imagining the details of a situation. So let’s start with one small imagination. That single thought will affect our next set of small actions.

Albert Einstein once said that imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited, but imagination embraces the entire world.

I imagine the children. I don’t even know their names. I imagine the actions that will help end the war. Please give a bit of your imagination to help solve the problems around the world. And, hopefully, turn our imagination to action.

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Imagine the Children