

Something to be Said

By Madeleine Stone

For a while now, I've been bugging my parents for a car. I even know which one I want. It's this red Camry Altise. I'm in love with this car. I haven't actually got my P's yet but I figure you got to get in early right. Bug them enough, for long enough, and they'll cave. They'll get me the car. And the insurance and rego of course because I don't have any money. So far though my parents are putting up a pretty good fight. Whenever I ask my mum about it her reply is always the same.

"When I win \$30 million in the lottery you can have WHATEVER you want."

Yeah, but how likely is that? But she still buys a ticket every other day. How many of you want to win the lottery? Free money right? Winning the lottery is pretty much everyone's dream. I don't think anyone can honestly say that they didn't want to win the lottery. And if they did you would think that they were crazy right? Be giving them the shifty eyes, wondering why they don't want it.

But hey that's the way the world works. Everyone wants something. Money, a new car, a new pair of shoes. Everyone wants something. But there is a difference between wanting something, and needing it. I don't need \$30 million or a new car or even new shoes. But I still want them. Some people will say it's because I'm still a kid and still want everything under the sun. But everyone does it. Everyone spends money on themselves and the things that they want.

Each year in America and Europe people spend \$20 billion dollars on perfume and makeup. Or how about this one: \$11 billion dollars on ice cream in Europe alone. \$11 BILLION dollars. On Ice cream. That's crazy. And how about the Olympic opening the other day? Roughly \$40 million Australian dollars just to open the games. But it's easy to spend all that money. A couple of dollars here and there but it all adds up. And why do we do it? Because we want stuff. We don't like going without.

It kind of makes you wonder though where else that money could go. \$40 million could get me way more than a Camry Altise. Heck I could probably get a stretch limo, driver included. Do you want know that truth though? I wouldn't know what to do with that much money. I mean yeah I'd buy myself a car and house and few other things but that would cost maybe \$10 million dollars. What do you do with the rest of it? Fly around the world...50 times. I guess I'd give some to a charity as well.

How many of you have ever given money to a charity? Seriously raise your hand. Stick your hand in the air if you've ever put a couple of dollars into one of the million and one UNICEF or World Vision tins hanging around or if you did the live below the line challenge earlier this year or if you've walked through Queen street mall and had someone jump out at you and start going on about how you can change the world. I think it's safe to say that pretty much everyone has been involved in helping fight against world poverty.

The word poverty weirds me out a bit. I mean I can't really define it. Its more than being poor or being the opposite of being wealthy. When I was little and I didn't finish my dinner my parents would always, always turn to me and say,

"Just think about those kids living in poverty in Africa. They would be begging for that food."

And I always use to turn around and say something stupid like,

“Yeah well me eating it isn’t gonna make them any better off now is it?”

Because of that whenever someone says the word poverty, I always think about kids in Africa but it’s not just in Africa. In fact out of the 2.2 billion children in the world, half of them live in poverty. 22,000 children die every day because of poverty. Makes me feel kind of bad for cracking jokes about it.

But do you want to know what makes me feel even worse? Out of the \$20 billion dollars used to buy makeup and perfume in Europe alone, the UN would have been able to provide water and sanitation as well as a basic education for every child in the developing world.

Or if every person in Europe gave up eating ice cream, just ice cream, for one year, the UN would be able to provide basic health care and food for all people in developing nations.

In the time it has taken me to say this speech over 70 children will have died due to poverty. And I’m not asking all of you to go out and put your life’s savings into the nearest UNICEF tin. All I’m asking is that the next time you seen one, chuck in a dollar or two. Yeah it may be annoying that they’re jumping out at you on the street and you may think that your couple of dollars isn’t going to do a lot or even reach those in need, but like I said before, it’s the little bits here and there that add up. If everyone chucked in a couple of dollars every now and then, it would make a huge difference to the lives of people less fortunate.

The next time you take for granted something as basic as food, think of those less fortunate. Think of the 8 million kids, kids who are grateful for every scrap of food they get that will die this year alone due to something that we have the power to change.