

<http://annaoposa.ph/2010/11/a-story-without-love-is-not-worth-telling/>

I like telling stories. On the last day of the Conference of Youth, I told the story of intergenerational climate equity. That's really just a fancy way of saying, "This is our future at stake, bitches!" I told the audience the story of my dad—how he fought for my rights twenty years ago in a case more popularly known as [Oposa vs. Factoran](#). He's also in Cancun as a negotiator for Micronesia, while I'm here to represent the Philippines because now, I'm old and brave enough to fight for my rights and for those ten, twenty years younger than me. In between intense meetings and discussions, he tells me to sit up straight, drink more water, or get enough sleep. I am suddenly reminded that he is my dad and not just another crazy person I work with.



That's my dad before his keynote speech at the Conference of Youth, and that's me in our Philippine Eco Ambassador t-shirt. I had nothing to do with him speaking at the COY. 'Twas a coincidence for both of us to be there :)

The other storytellers a.k.a. panelists were Victoria Loorz, of [Kids vs Global Warming](#), Lucy Emerson-Bell of the [iMatter March campaign](#), and my partner/mentor in EnTrust International, Nicky Peart.



If you look closely, there's a Philippine flag pin on my dress—a fixture when I speak at international arenas

During the open forum, a 14-year-old Mexican girl raised her hand. She was wearing a t-shirt that said “PLANT FOR PLANET: Trees for Climate Justice.”



“I have a question,” she said.

“Yes?”

“I have a problem. I have a friend who uses the air con everyday. Even when she is not at home, she uses the air con. I tried to talk to her and tell her that she needs to turn it off, but she doesn't understand. It's very hard,” she said. “So... How do I

change people's minds? How do I make people care? Because right now, they don't care."

"Can I ask you a question? How did *you* start caring about the environment?"

She smiled. "Well, I like National Geographic and Discovery Channel, so I watch it a lot. One time, I read that we need to accept that we are living in a mess. Ever since I read that, I wanted to do more."

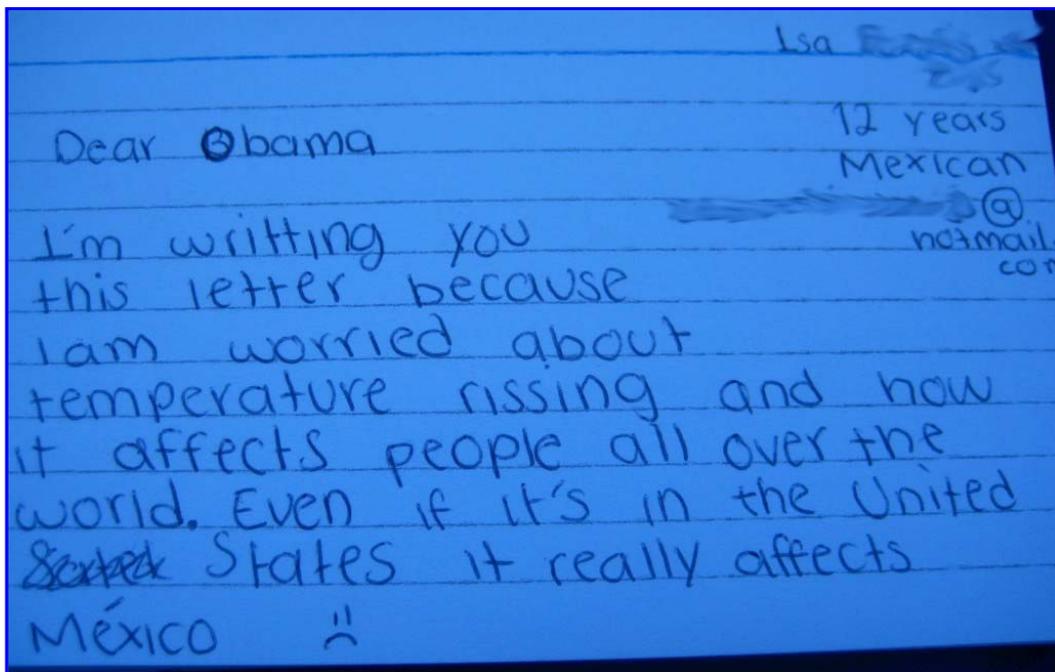
(At this point my only thought was, "Thank god I didn't put eyeliner today because omg I am going to start crying.")

Another audience member raised her hand. Marcy, a 23-year-old from America. She looked at the young girl in the eyes and spoke to her in a gentle manner, like an older sister coaxing her younger sibling. "Can I tell you something? When I started getting involved in environmental work, I was a little bit older than you. I was 17. My whole family got mad at me. My friends didn't understand. They said a lot of mean things to me, and they made me feel like a bad person for caring about the environment. I could've fought with them, but I didn't. I chose to **respond with love**. I never got mad, or answered back. I just continued to do what I was doing. And you know what? After I got back from [Copenhagen last year](#), the funniest thing happened. My parents apologized to me! They said sorry for all the mean things they did and said to me," she said. "And you. You may be young, and you may be having a hard time now, but just by talking to your friends, you are already doing a *big* thing. You may not change minds right away, but if you respond with love, trust me, eventually, you will."

I no longer responded because I was hiding behind my laptop, weeping. When we are able to listen, respond, and believe in each others' stories, these stories transform into love stories. And that's why we, the kids of the world, came all the way to Cancun—to tell the lawyers and leaders of the world at the United Nations Climate Change Convention our story. They need to be reminded that climate change negotiations aren't only about economics and engineering and egos. More than anything, this is about securing our future. We're inheriting the world they screwed up, after all.

We closed the workshop by jumpstarting a project I'm launching next year entitled Children's Letters to Leaders. (Wanna help out? Email me!) We asked everyone to write letters to a particular world leader and tell them a personal story about why climate change affects them, and their proposal to address these issues.

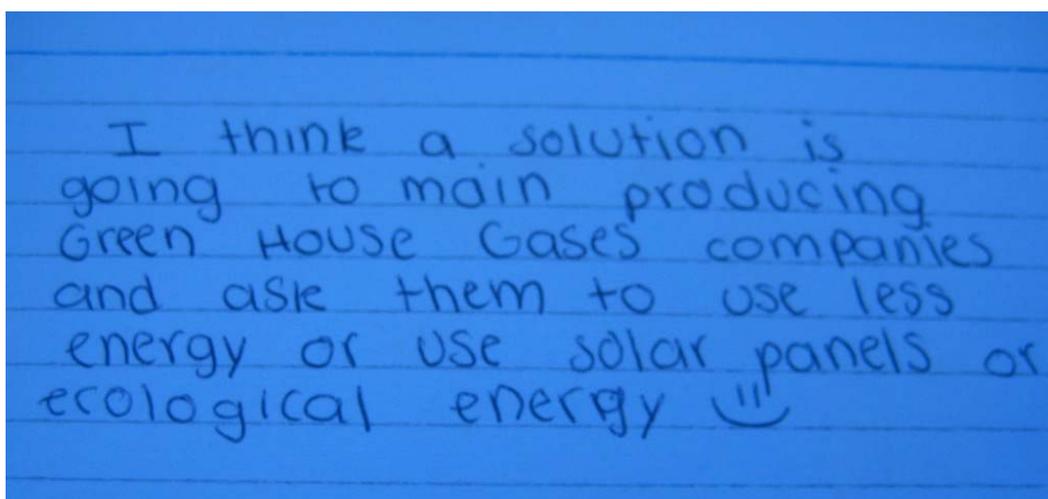
Here is my favorite one, from a 12-year-old made of smarts.



Lisa Robles
12 years
Mexican
@hotmail.com

Dear Obama

I'm writing you
this letter because
I am worried about
temperature rising and how
it affects people all over the
world. Even if it's in the United
~~States~~ States it really affects
México ☹️



I think a solution is
going to main producing
Green House Gases companies
and ask them to use less
energy or use solar panels or
ecological energy 😊