

"My name is Hannah Nelson, I am 16 years old, and I am from Northern Ireland. I have been thinking about an important question: how do you make peace last?"

Lasting peace in our country is not just a simple dream for me as a teenager growing up today. I believe that lasting peace can only come about through true respect for others. We have a right to express and celebrate our different cultures. We all need to value each other as individuals.

As a 16-year-old I don't want to live in the past, I want to live for the past. I want to live in a country where it is not my religion that is important but my value as a person. It is important that we all have an identity and a choice to choose who and what we want to be. We are growing up in a world where we are taught to be forgiving. We must put this into practice to live peacefully.

We must accept our differences if we are to move forward. I think that my age group should be the focus. We are the ones who must build new relationships with people from different communities. If we can take away prejudice from young peoples' minds, we can build a tolerant society.

Northern Ireland is my home. The reality is it has a past. Often in Northern Ireland we hear about our past.

But truthfully, we should not let the past pull us apart and stop us from moving forward. Somehow, we need to make a brighter future: a future that builds bridges and brings people together. We need to work together. We need to listen to each other and value each other.

Peace is not easy. And it takes a lot of work to make it happen. I think that it is easy for some to sit back and hold on to the past. However, for peace to be an actual reality, we all need to take responsibility in the present. It is all about time. It is in the present time that we really need to be responsible, accountable people; and live to make a better future for ourselves.

There is no time like the present. Now is the time to start making lasting peace happen in Northern Ireland. Because we, the young people in this room, want and deserve to live in peace."

My name is RM, the leader of the group BTS. As a global citizen of this world, I imagined the limitless possibilities before all of us, my heart beating with excitement. But COVID-19 was beyond my imagination. Our world tour was canceled, all our plans went away, and I became alone. I looked up but couldn't see the stars at night.

I felt hopeless. Everything fell apart. I could only look outside my window; I could only go to my room. Yesterday, I was singing and dancing with fans around the world, and now my world had shrunk to a room.

Life became simple, maybe for the first time. When I'm on tour, I stand in bright lights and loud cheers, but at night, back in my room, my world becomes only a few paces wide. The room itself was small, but my world and our world reached far and wide.

But this time it felt different. It felt lonelier and smaller. Why? I thought for a long time. I thought, "If I give up here, then I'm not the star of my life."

I don't know who was first. We embraced all these emotions and the seven of us began to make music together. This is where the music came from, and this made us honest. We don't know all the answers. I knew where I wanted to go, but not how I could get there.

Thinking about the future and trying hard are important. But cherishing yourself, encouraging yourself and keeping yourself happy is the most important. We live in uncertainty, but really, nothing's changed. If there's something I can do, if our voices can give strength to people, then that's what we want and that's what we'll keep on doing.

Now more than ever, we must try to remember who we are, and face who we are. Stars shine brightest when the night is darkest. If the stars are hidden, we'll let moonlight guide us. If even the moon is dark, let our faces be the light that helps us find our way.

Let's dream about a future when our worlds can break out of our small rooms again. It might feel like it's always night and we'll always be alone, But the night is always darkest before the first light of dawn.