

This story is about three people who you would not even think of being connected. Could you even imagine a candy maker, a doctor of research and a ten-year-old Chinese-American girl being part of the same story? Well believe it or not, it is true. Milton S. Hershey, Jonas Salk and the young girl may have been born at different times and from different backgrounds, but the one thing they had in common was that they all wanted to make a difference in the world.

To start this interesting story, let me begin by telling you about that ten-year-old Chinese-American girl. She just happens to be me. My story begins in southern China. When I was just ten days old, my birth parents had to give me up because of the Chinese one child rule. About a year later, an American family adopted me and gave me the loving home every person needs. Everything was happy until my mother was diagnosed with cancer.

I did not exactly understand what was wrong, but I knew Mom was very sick and that made me feel frightened. We spent much of our time at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. The doctors and nurses not only cared for my mom, they took the time to explain to me how everything worked, how they would cure her. That began my interest in finding a cure for cancer someday. Most kids my age love Milton S. Hershey for his chocolate creations, but I praise him for the money he left for charity. You see Milton Hershey had an enormous heart and he wanted to make a difference in the world.

Mr. Hershey was born on a farm in a small town called Derry Church, which is now Hershey, Pennsylvania. He was raised in the strict Mennonite religion. His family had to move often, so he was only able to attend school through the fourth grade. At the early age of thirteen, Mr. Hershey was hired as an apprentice to a printmaker. Unfortunately, he despised his job and

purposely dropped his hat in the printer so he would be fired which left him free to follow his dream to become a candy maker.

His first success was the Lancaster Caramel Company, which he eventually sold to find the perfect formula for milk chocolate. Of course, we all know Hershey Chocolate was a huge success, perhaps not only because it was delicious, but also for the gorgeous town and wonderful amusements. He built it all for his employees. He wanted them to have a better life. Since he and his wife, Catherine, could not have children of their own, they opened a boarding school for boys in need of a home. When Catherine died suddenly, Milton Hershey left his entire chocolate trust to the home for boys. Then in 1963, fifty million dollars was given from this trust to build the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, the hospital that would eventually cure my mother's cancer.

Last year in fourth grade, I had to pick a hero to write about. Milton S. Hershey was already picked by dozens of people in my grade. So knowing my science interest, Mom suggested Jonas Salk. I immediately felt a text-to-self connection. Jonas Salk and I both came to America from another country that did not have the freedoms we have here. I am here because of the over population in China, as well as that country's need to have sons to care for the people in their old age. Dr. Salk came here from Russia to escape the violence against the Jews. We both saw sickness in our childhoods. I saw cancer. Jonas Salk saw Polio, a disease that paralyzes the arms, legs and lungs. This, as well as the injustice he saw both in religion and during the Depression, made him want to make a difference in the world. He worked hard as a student, skipping several grades. At age twelve, he was selected to go to a special high school for the brightest boys in New York City. Dr. Salk was not quite sixteen when he entered City College of New York with thoughts of being a lawyer. A chemistry class convinced him to

decide on a career in medical research even though it did not pay well. He entered New York University's College of Medicine and began his devotion to research and vaccines. Jonas Salk dedicated his life to finding a cure for Polio, just as I want to spend my life working to find a cure for cancer. Both of these people taught me it could take many failures to find success.

Now you can see how such different people can share such a deep connection. You do not have to be the same to share a goal. No one can find a cure alone, but everyone can make a difference.

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