

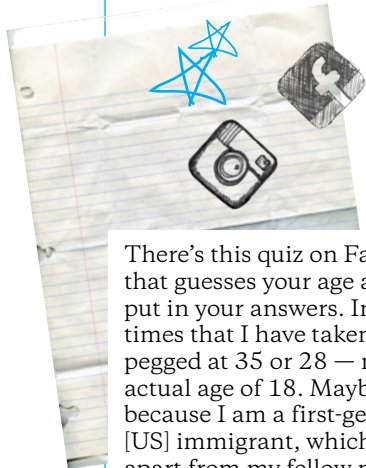
Age no bar
 What a **millennial** wants
 you to know about her
 selfie-obsessed generation



MICHELLE PHAN



TAVI GEVINSON



There's this quiz on Facebook that guesses your age after you put in your answers. In all the times that I have taken it, I'm pegged at 35 or 28 — never my actual age of 18. Maybe that's because I am a first-generation [US] immigrant, which sets me apart from my fellow millennials. But maybe all of us have been unfairly branded as carbon copies, uniformly following the latest trends on Instagram and Facebook. The older generations, the Baby Boomers and Generation X, may scoff at our vlogs and selfies, but that is how we leave our mark in this otherwise evanescent, fast-paced world.

Time is not the only thing that ages us. Our wisdom cannot be determined by the lines on our face. I've seen the lives that some people have lived — in their eyes, through their walk, from their speech. I know people who have 'lived' more at 17 than those at 50. Which is why it completely confounds me when people disregard my voice because of my age.

We live in a factory-like society. The steps are listed out like a manual. Go to school, get into college, earn a degree, land a job, marry, have children, retire. In school especially, these machine-like mechanisms can be seen, and unfortunately, much like in a factory, there is no time for 'defects'. In high school, everyone says that they encourage individual thought, but they turn a blind eye when you have something to say. They plug their ears and bury you under work when you contradict them. But the wondrous thing about technology is the outlet that it creates, allowing lost voices to be heard.

Michelle Phan was only 18 when she began her beauty blog. She was a waitress who couldn't get a job at a department store; now she has her own make-up line and is making millions. Malala Yousafzai believed in education for everyone, including women. She upheld her beliefs, defying even the Taliban. She's won the Nobel Prize at only 17. And let's not forget Tavi Gevinson, who was only 11 when she started her widely popular fashion/feminist blog. She's now 18, has her own magazine and has been featured in the *Forbes*' 30 Under 30 list twice. These are but three people who have 'lived' more than many 50- and 60-year-olds. Three teenagers who understood their passion at a young age and ran as far as they could with it, changing the world along the way.

So don't just discredit us because you believe you know better. Adults may be a few chapters further into their stories than teenagers are, but that doesn't mean that the stories we do have, don't matter.

— NISHAT ANJUM

Nishat Anjum is a freshman at Brooklyn College, and a mentee-alum at the New York-based community, Girls Write Now. A native of Bangladesh, Anjum is a recipient of the Silver Key in Short Story for The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

BOOK MARK

Teen bloggers stepping into the big leagues

Hollie Williamson
Forthequainhearted.
 blogspot.co.uk

This British teen's sharp sense of style has already been spotted and photographed by The Sartorialist. On her blog, you'll find runway round-ups, trend updates and glimpses into the life of a 17-year-old.



Romilly Newman
 Romillynewman.com

'Teenage girl, adult food', says the bio of this 16-year-old New Yorker who makes frequent appearances on The Food Network and also writes for Zoey Deschanel's girls-only website, Hello Giggles.



Jules Spector
 Teenfeminist.com

"Girls are going to change the world," promises this 14-year-old. She's doing her part by rounding up an army of teen feminists (online and offline) with her compelling blog posts and UN Girl Up meet-ups.



NISHAT ANJUM (ED GOURDINE/GIRLS WRITE NOW)