

# Shelby Strong

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Who Am I?

Hello there,

Do you remember my name?

Do you remember what I am? Or what I was when I was first born?

Do you remember what I meant to people? Or how hard they fight for just a little taste of me?

No? Will you let me remind you; maybe if you remember, then the situations we are in might change for the better...

In 1886, France gave The United States of America a statue, in my honor. America put this statue in the harbor of New York; it was a welcoming symbol for a lot of people who really needed a welcoming. This statue gave them hope because they were reminded of me; I was what they wanted. A lot of people are grateful for me. If I hadn't been introduced they might have a very difficult life.

But now there is a "No Trespassing" sign on the statue. People are now persecuted because of their religion or where they came from. I used to promise these same people freedoms, a future that is better than they could have imagined, and a place that would be safe for them to come to and they could control their own life. But now, I am something promised but not yet given; they say I need to be "earned." But this is not what I want. I want everyone to be equal. That is my purpose! Now I am being changed, twisted, mangled, and contorted. I feel trapped, as in a tiny box and I am only being let out in portions. And to only those who are deemed 'worthy.' The opportunities I promised a lot of society are now being seized by people in higher power. They try to change me; but I will always have the same meaning. People are being oppressed for just being. Slavery was supposed to end a long time ago. But it is still happening in a way. People with certain skin colors are either given or declined for a job or position just because of their skin color. Others are rejected a job they need because of their religious beliefs. "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *liberty*" (2 Corinthians 3:17). We used to consider America a Christian nation but now we almost persecute those with religious beliefs. Also, sometimes people are suspected of a crime they didn't commit because of where they came

from. Once upon a time, I was supposed to make equality and make everyone happy. Now it seems I don't.

This is what I am, what I stand for, and what I try to bring for a great number of humans. To bring people their dreams, to give them the freedoms they always wanted- is my job. People want to be free within a society from oppressive restrictions. That is what I was supposed to give them, a place where they had the power to act as they please, I tried to give them this. People fight for me. They fight and some die. But they shouldn't have too. I want to be given; not "earned" as people call it. I just want to give the people of this world the freedoms they deserve. No one person is better than the other; and I stood for this. I stood for everything I thought was right. This was my meaning. This was my purpose. But it has changed. Not to me of course; but to the people. To the people I was trying to help, I am now something they must fight for again and again. I do so wish that it would change.

So I ask again. Do you know who I am?

Do you remember my name?

Do you still don't know?

I am Liberty.

Still here, not forgotten!