

Books can shape the way an individual thinks about the world. I think Dickinson was right when she said "There is no frigate like a book" - It can take us to places we have never even dreamed of, and also be our weapon of knowledge. I typically read books to learn things, which is probably why I love a good self help book. It can shift my perspective about a worry I have, or simply let me know that I am not alone. Books can be extremely powerful - narratives can be extremely powerful. These stories can show a person that nothing is impossible and can even help someone figure out a dream life they never would have thought possible.

Furthermore, I find the idea of banned books to be interesting. I understand that more conservative people wouldn't want their kids to learn about sex at such an early age, but then they wouldn't really understand their body parts until much later, which would lead to a different problem that John Oliver put so hilariously. However, banning books in countries that simply want to control the way their citizens think seems terrible. I feel grateful to be living, as an adult, in a free country so I am able to think and act however I think is best. In the Ted Talk, the speaker talked so eloquently about the power of comparative reading and I look back on my journey in my faith. I have done a lot of comparative reading with Christianity and other religions, and I think that has made my faith grow even stronger, rather than what would be feared to do the opposite. I think censoring books is a terrible idea and we should all have the liberty to read as many books from these banned lists as possible. I find that most of these books are banned because of foul language and unpleasant themes, but life is unpleasant and an individual might find solace in these relatable characters.

There is all this fear around books, which is valid because books are extremely powerful and hold a lot of responsibility in how a person thinks. However, I think it's how the person reacts to these books that holds the power. For example, the average person could read a Shakespeare play and not connect with it at all, thus not really having their perspective shift. But if you're anything like me, you would see the timeless characters and themes in a new lens that would move you to think about life in a different way. Furthermore, I think reading books contradictory from your original point of view is necessary because it will allow you to either confirm what you believe in or give you the opportunity to shift your beliefs. I can see how it can be a little intimidating for something you have believed in to be tested, but I think it's one of the best things you can do for your mind. We are always learning and growing and ideas shift all the time. If we let literary influences guide us, maybe this world might be a little less scary.