Brandeis is a lot of things, but it is not social justice. We strive to actualize social justice, are founded on social justice, perhaps flaunts social justice, but are not social justice. I’d like to think it’s very difficult for something to be social justice.

So what is social justice? Well, not Brandeis....social justice is a way of life. It is a worldview which is informed by and shapes the world. A manifesto to identify injustice, fight it. Rinse and repeat. Higher education may be the gateway to living social justice because it helps with the first step: identifying injustice. Knowledge is power and, though we may not always feel it, we have gained profound knowledge over the past four years.

Our four years started with Ford Hall 2015. The first semester we were on campus, students reignited a conversation about racial equity on campus, did social justice, and made gains. We were here to celebrate the centennial of Louis D. Brandeis’ nomination to the United States Supreme Court with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. We were here for the 2016 presidential election, and the day after, when it seemed that the stench of injustice had permeated our own campus. But we persist. In 2017, two Brandeis professors won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for their work on the circadian rhythm. And so, we explored. But we also broke boundaries: 2018, studenthood became a rallying cry to call for gun violence prevention. Our community organized to demand that survivors be heard, listened to, and believed.

How many of those things were you involved with? Does a handful of, albeit pretty awesome, anecdotes capture your Brandeis experience? Probably not.

Do you think you missed out? Probably not. Each and every one of us has become a shard in the stained glass mural that is Brandeis. A piece of a beautiful whole that is not only more beautiful because of, but is in fact made beautiful because of its juxtaposition of the individual with the community. Ours is a community that knows each of its
members has the capability of making the world a better place. The world expects us to be selfish, and sometimes we'll have to be, but social justice demands that we see the bigger picture.

When I think of the bigger picture, I think of the person who I met at Brandeis with whom I will forever share the knowledge that we met here - Rachel...unsurprising, I know.

The university campus, or at least Brandeis' campus, is not where social justice is or should be done. More precisely, the university is only one place where social justice can be done. Social justice can also be done in state houses, schools, nonprofits, and a motley of other places. But not investment banks - you probably don't meet my standards for social justice if you're planning on working at an investment bank. Anyway, the other places where social justice is done represent both a greater quantity and magnitude of injustice, and therefore a greater opportunity to do social justice.

No four years of your life will be the same, I hope that these past four were great, but I insist that they have made you greater. Brandeis is a social justice school. Massive investments of time, money, and energy go into making it so each year. Whether or not you were invested in that facet of our home over the past four years, I implore you to invest in a socially just you; to divest from what you know to be wrong and reinvest in the future, our future.

The injustices in our world are such that they cannot be ignored. We cannot sustain the status quo. We cannot call ourselves social justice lest we live it.

*That* is my message for you, Brandeis.