

LOUNG UNG | SPEAKING TOPICS | TESTIMONIALS

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"Courage is when you dare to be yourself, in whatever ways you want to be - to not be afraid, to just do it." ~ Loung Ung

Author, activist and co-screenplay writer of *First They Killed My Father*, now a film streaming on Netflix directed by Angelina Jolie, Loung Ung utilizes storytelling to create resilience and healing narratives from the pages to screen.

AUTHOR-SPEAKER-ACTIVIST:

A lifelong activist, Loung Ung has gained recognition as a public speaker, bestselling author, and co-screenplay writer of the 2017 Netflix Original Movie, “*First They Killed My Father*”. Her activism journey began in 1993 when she became the Community Educator for a domestic shelter in Maine. Since then, Loung has worked on various campaigns, including those aimed at ending violence against women, eradicating landmines globally, and stopping the use of child soldiers. Loung's commitment to helping her native land heal from the traumas of war led her to make her first trip back to Cambodia in 1995, and she has returned over forty times. In 2013, she expanded her activism reach to screenplay writing and was one of the writers for the groundbreaking film, *Girl Rising*, directed by Academy Award nominee Richard Robbins.

A survivor of the Cambodian genocide and a former refugee, Loung brings a unique perspective to issues facing displaced persons and marginalized communities around the world. Her personal experience of rebuilding her life in a new country informs her work as a speaker, writer, and advocate. Through her talks, Loung shares insights on the challenges faced by individuals and communities who are forced to start anew, as well as the importance of resilience and finding agency in our own lives. Loung has shared her messages at numerous schools, universities and forums in the U.S. and internationally, including Stanford University, Dartmouth College, Philips Academy, Facing History and Ourselves, Women in the World Summit, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the Mexico 1 Million Youth Summit. Her topics have centered on issues such as building resilience, ending violence against women and marginalized communities, eradicating landmines, and the use of child soldiers, among others.

Loung's impressive work has earned her recognition, including being selected as one of the "100 Global Youth Leaders of Tomorrow" by the World Economic Forum. She has been featured in various publications, television, and radio shows such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *CNN*, and *The Today Show*. Loung has also been the subject of documentary films broadcast by *Nightline*, German *ARTE*, and Japanese *NHK*.

TRAVELS FROM: Cleveland, Ohio

SPEAKING TOPICS

- First They Killed My Father: An Eyewitness Account of the Cambodian Genocide
- Choosing Resilience in Troubled Times: Five Lessons in Cultivating Your Grit
- Power Narratives: Why Rewriting Your Story Will Change Your Life
- Finding Your Voice: Empowerment and Self-Discovery through Writing
- Work for Change: How We Can All Transform Our Community
- From Surviving to Thriving: Strategies for Personal Growth and Empowerment in Times of Change

TESTIMONIALS:

"Her capacity to share her own journey of surviving trauma and healing is nothing short of stunning. As a master presenter, Loung helps us grieve the horrors we are all touched by and inspires us to reach for a more peaceful and compassionate way of living. Her presence is sheer grace." ~ *Carla Goldstein Director Women's Institute at Omega*

"Loung delivered a powerful, moving, and yet very human story. People watched in total rapt attention, many with tears in their eyes. Once you have heard Loung speak, you are captivated, drawn in and left feeling good and wanting to do something positive with your life." ~ *Tom Wright General Manager, India, Middle East, Africa & Pakistan Cathay Pacific*

"Loung Ung's story as a young child in Cambodia and her struggles and triumphs to overcome her traumas in America were inspiring, eloquent, and powerful. The concept of the "American Dream" was put into perspective and made a powerful statement to our students." ~ *Kristen Dvorsky Events Coordinator, Office of Student Activities Fisher College*

"Loung was a gracious, vibrant, riveting speaker. We greatly appreciated her all the ways she wove it into her interviews and address. Speaking before an audience of 1,500 at the organization's annual fundraising luncheon, she set a new record of attendees for us." ~ *Michele Chiuse Director of Communications Rosie's Place, Boston, MA*

"Loung was personable, engaging, and thoughtful, and her interactions with my students was tremendously touching and authentic. The evening presentation brought in a full house (on a weeknight!) and the audience hung on her every word – you could have heard a pin drop. I would strongly recommend a visit by Ms. Ung – the impact she had on us as a school and as individuals was deep and moving." ~ *Aya Murata Advisor to Asian and Asian American Student Phillips Academy*

"Of all the talks given by guest speakers at Andover, Loung Ung's was the most powerful. The Khmer Rouge genocide is a significant tragedy that many people are still unfamiliar with and there is nobody who could have shared its stories better than Ung. Like her book, Ung's speech was passionate and moving. When Loung Ung started speaking, the whole auditorium turned silent – everyone was captivated and many were in tears." ~ *Yuni Sumawijaya '12 Vice-President of Asian Society Phillips Academy*

"Loung Ung's presentation was truly inspirational. Her ability and disarming use of humor took the audience with her, no doubt surprised to find themselves sharing laughter along the way. Loung's life-affirming energy represents a triumph of the human spirit over adversity." ~ *John Watson, Programme Director Amnesty International*

"Loung's voice is powerful! She reminds us of our common humanity while appreciating cultural differences that make us unique. She focused on the role of biography in shaping who and what we are – but not allowing it to limit our vision of ourselves or each other. Her message inspired our clinicians to better understand the perspective of those whom we serve." ~ *Shed Boren, PhD Administrator, CEO Sister Emmanuel Hospital*

"Loung was not only an outstanding speaker but also extremely skilled in shaping her passion and commitment to the theme of Seattle Human Rights Day. The audience was riveted to their seats during her presentation and there were few dry eyes in the house. Her event was one of our best ever." ~ *Germaine W. Covington, Director Seattle Office of Civil Rights*

"The 'All Johnson County Reads the Same Book' planning committee selected Loung Ung's *First They Killed My Father* for its community read. It was an outstanding decision... The project culminated in a University of Iowa lecture in which Loung received a standing ovation from an audience of over 500 who were captured by the substance of the subject matter and her passion for social justice." ~ *Chivy Sok Deputy Director University of Iowa Center for Human Rights*

"Loung Ung is a rare and remarkable speaker. As a survivor of the Cambodian Killing Fields, Loung takes her audience into a world of unspeakable suffering, heartbreaking loss, and unimaginable hardship. Yet, it is not these things that remain with you after you have heard her speak. What stays with you is Loung's voice. A voice of strength, kindness, and most of all, of incandescent hope. A voice that boldly empowers us to put down whatever hardship we might have endured and forge ahead to create the world we all would like to see." ~ *Gail Straub, Co-founder and Executive Director The Empowerment Institute*

"Loung Ung gives a face and voice to a topic that could otherwise be almost inaccessible due its great sadness and weight: the topic of war and genocide. Ms. Ung has the compassion and spirit necessary to connect with audiences that might otherwise be overwhelmed by the menace and malice of history. Her story, as tragic as it might be, fills the listener with a sense of hope, direction, and purpose. Whereas her subject matter is as difficult and challenging as it gets, Loung Ung's presence is a straightforward testimony of human strength and the possibility of good rising from evil." ~ *Dan Scheibe, Assistant Head of School Middlesex School*

"Outstanding! She connected with students, staff and parents. Her sense of social justice and humanity have touched the minds, hearts and souls of our community. Although she is now gone, her influence will continue to resonate for many people. On a pragmatic level, her experience as a survivor and a humanitarian have provided us with insights and shifts that will shape the way we think about and support service learning for our students in our school." ~ *Mark R. Boyer, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Singapore American School*