

Merrill Middle School
Des Moines, Iowa

Dear Terry Trueman,

My name is Shawn McDaniel, I'm 14 years old. I think my father is planning to kill me. Before I read Stuck in Neutral, I didn't really pay attention to the challenged kids. I didn't understand how life is for some of them. I didn't realize that some of the challenged kids are ignored all the time, like Shawn.

Stuck in Neutral made me look at the world from a different perspective. At my school I used to look at it as normal people and challenged kids. I was one of the normal kids, so I know what it's like to be recognized. Then there are the challenged kids like Shawn, who don't really act like they're there. They don't volunteer much or tryout for sports. Most of the popular kids just call them names and make fun of them. Last year when I was in fifth grade, there was a kid who sat in the back of the room at indoor recess playing cards by himself. Next time we had indoor recess, I sat next to him and played cards with him. After that, I could tell he felt good, and so did I.

Now I think of school as one big group of people who are special in their own way. Thank you for making me realize how wrong I was to see challenged kids in from different perspective.

Sincerely,

David Eckley