

Franklin Middle School  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Dear Mr. Mikaelson,

How can I change my life was the question that lingered in the back of my mind for the longest time. But as I was pulled into the world of the book *Touching Spirit Bear*, the question forced its way front and center. I thought aimlessly about the question day and night. It seemed as though neither Cole nor I would ever find the answer to that question. But, as I finished your novel, it came clear to be of what I had to do to answer the question; how can I change my life.

When I entered the eighth grade this year, everyone would say things like, “Your different this year.” and “you’ve changed.” Those simple statements nagged at me, and forced me to make a decision. I decided to not only make myself feel better, but everyone around me in a better mood. And the book *Touching Spirit Bear*, changed my life in a way I couldn’t even imagine.

Through the great hardships both Cole and Peter suffered, I realized that bullying happens even today, and I realized that everyone had it as well as I did. I learned that without goals in life, or appreciation to the fellow man, I’m stuck in neutral. Without those qualities, I can’t get anywhere, or be anything. I decided I would not turn into another Cole Mathews. I decided I would not let anger and sour hatred engulf my life.

The harsh reality that I faced however was that I was becoming a bully, a Cole Mathews. The next days I strived and struggled to as nice and kind and loving as much as I could, and those days were completely opposite of the past. The book taught me to respect everyone and live everyday to its fullest. The book taught me the consequences of becoming a bully, and further yet, the pain of the ones being bullied. I veered myself away from becoming a bully and now I stick up for the ones in Peter’s situation.

How can I change my life? The answer to that most intricate, revealing, and life altering question is now clear as day to me. I have changed myself, and my ways after reading the compelling novel, *Touching Spirit Bear*. I’m not perfect, nor is any one else, but my change was just one of the many challenges I will face in my life ahead.

Sincerely,

Drew Johnson