

Franklin Middle School  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Dear Ben Mikaelson,

Your book, Touching Spirit Bear, has changed my perspective on life and how I should live mine. I already knew that making a wrong decision can lead to serious consequences. By reading this book I now know that making a wrong decision can even result in near death. The part when Cole made a huge mistake by deciding to attach the famous Spirit Bear brought me to that conclusion.

This decision that Cole made to attack the bear was a crucial one. As you described it, the bear out muscled, out sized and over powered Cole by almost destroying Cole's future. After reading about this horrific scene it changed my mind about what I should do before I take action. These are the steps I now follow: 1. Think about what my choices are, 2. Think of all possible consequences, and 3. Take the best action. I haven't made many wrong choices that have lead to something big, but now I know how to avoid a major disaster.

I'm sure there are plenty of reasons for Cole's anger, but one that sticks out is his life at home. From another's prospective it's everyone who's against him. My belief is that a lot of his anger is caused by the way he is treated at home; he was beaten often and was beaten until his skin was broken (as in bleeding) or very raw and numb. When I began to read about how his family treated him I began to think about how lucky I am to have such loving and caring parents that I can go to for shelter.

Unlike me, Cole seemed like he never considered the consequences for his actions until he was mauled over by the Spirit Bear. After that meeting I believe he started to realize that life is short and you need to think before you act, also he needs to learn from his mistakes, and Cole didn't do that either until the incident with the bear. I've known for a while now about learning from mistakes, but sometimes I've had a hard time keeping them learned. After reading about how he repeatedly made the same mistakes and kept blaming it on others, I thought to myself "How dumb can one kid be to not learn from what he did just ten minutes ago". And then I realized "wow", I did that same thing by not learning right away, so after I read those parts I've now started to practice what I need to work on at home more often.

Overall this book has taught me a lot about life and now to make it better and more memorable. Also I've learned how to make better decisions, get rid of anger in a different way than actions on others, for example playing sports, and finding a good place to calm your mind. I've also realized how lucky I ma to have caring parents and live in a good environment (people wise).

Sincerely,

Anthony Schug