

Burgundy Zellmer
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Dear Mattie J.T. Stepanek,

I read your "Celebrate Through Heartsongs" book of poems. You have the most will power than any kid that I have ever known, even if you do have some disabilities you still seem to live up to what you write. In this book of poems I noticed you described what it is like to turn to god and how not to worry about things that are going on in life. Try to solve them as you go through life; I figured out that is what I am trying to do.

Some time ago my friends and I were trying to get one of our friends that was really close in the past, to stop doing bad things. She was hanging out with the wrong crowd mostly and wanted to fit in. She has gotten drunk more than once, she was throwing up after she ate, and was cutting herself on her hips where no one could see she told us one day. We were really worried about her and she got the point for some time, but I don't know if she really knows how much we care still she was fine until her brother went away to college and her sister is also going away this year. She also started to hang out with people that weren't her friends, and the funny thing was she kind of acted like she didn't even know us anymore. After I read your book somehow, it showed me how to confront her with confidence even though the book didn't really talk about that kind of stuff. Of course my friends and I didn't just walk up and say you shouldn't be doing that! We kind of showed her our feelings; She still seems like she cares sometimes, but I am really still worried about her. It's almost like losing someone you love a lot. I pray for her and all the people in the world who are going through some tough times in their lives even though I don't know the people I still try to help them out a little by praying. I seem to think now how every last second counts that you have with them you never know what might happen that you never would see that person again. I also pray for what is happening to some of my own friends and family.

I came to realize if you turn to God, all things are possible. It's like a heavy weight that has just been lifted off your shoulders. He takes all what your feeling and throws it "out the window." You don't have to worry what you look like, how you dress, or who likes you. Real people should care about what you are like on the inside, not the outside. You and your book have taught me a few other things also; that nothing else matters in life except who you are, and how you act onto others. Treat others how you want to be treated; you also showed me how to stand up again when times are hard.

One of my other friends (sorry I'm talking about my friends so much but I have to, to describe your book) anyway he kept saying he was going to kill himself. He would say it in school sometimes but I would just say, "Don't Gage a lot of people care about you" he would just turn his head away. Then on homecoming he was running away from us because he told two other girls he was going to kill himself and said he didn't deserved to live anymore because his dad had committed suicide also. He tried to jump the fence and snagged his hand on the post. He was in shock, he kept saying he was ok and that his hand bleeding was cool. We tried to help him up but got Mr. Bailey because he wouldn't

come. That night was horrible I cried the whole night. Then he moved away I felt like everything was my fault because I didn't tell anyone, But then a few months later I read your book and it made me stand up tall again. Everything will turn out for the best in the end following the things you wrote I would say to myself. Even if your going through bad times just try to face what is happening. Kind of like what you do Mattie, you don't let anything get in the way of your dreams. Even if you can't be like every normal kid, you still act like you could play baseball, or do the things a normal kid would do.

Your book has also made things seem so much easier. It has opened my life to new opportunities that I haven't thought of or tried before. A lot of kids at my school don't care about the feelings of others, but your book would show everyone the real meaning of life, and I am positive it would impact their lives, as it did mine. Several times the grades about our grade make our teachers cry. That just makes me feel bad and sad at the same time I just wish more people would read your book and find out, how peoples actions can either affect a person in a good way or bad way. I guess what I am trying to say is, you are thought of as one of my hero's now that I have read your book. You have made such an impact on my life that if I had never read your beautiful poems in this book, I would have never discovered that you, the little boy with a caring heart for others, could write such poems and help others. In the book, your poems also kind of describe what people are in the world how we treat other people. Some people are "different shades of colors" you said meaning different colors, ages and interests; Your poem says that really doesn't matter what you are, we should all stick together in thick and thin and not ditch a person because of how they are but welcome them. Thank you for writing these poems and some other of your books of poems I have not read, but I promise I will get to them as soon as I can. Also, thank you for helping me out a little bit with life. I hope this letter was a signal about how you have impacted others as well as you did mine and how you are impacting others every day by your writing. Thank you for sharing your poems with everyone also.

Yours truly,
Burgundy Zellmer

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