

December 5, 2007

Dear Ben Mikaelson,

I have read Touching Spirit Bear countless times, and each time I felt more at peace after the experience. This book has instilled in me the striking reality that no one person is better than anybody else; if someone thinks they are awesome and "all that," really they are insignificant compared to the vast universe around them. After I have read your book I always feel more humble. Touching Spirit Bear has had the same effects on me that it had on Cole in the story. Each time I lay down your book, at the bitter end I have a renewed sense of quality and compassion. Touching Spirit Bear truly changed me.

Maybe I relate to it so well because it is about a boy my age trying to find himself--like me--or maybe it affects me so much because it takes place out in the wilderness, in nature, the two things I love. Whatever the reason, Touching Spirit Bear is the most powerful book that I have ever read. I realized after I'd read it a couple of times, the things Garvey and Edwin taught Cole about the circle of life were not only true for him but also for other people as well. How the way that you look at the good side or the bad side of things determines if you are a person who traverses though life making the best of it, or if you are a person that always feels sorry for yourself and looks at the glass half empty. Having learned a lot about how anger can affect people in this book, I decided when I became angry to think of Cole: the consequences of being angry.

Your book physically affected me in a marvelous way that changed my life. When Edwin had Cole go with him up the river to the pond and they sat in the cold water, then felt so alive and refreshed when they came out, it made me ponder, "I wonder if this would work for me?" So the next morning after I was done washing in the shower I turned the water down to freezing cold and just stood in it. Standing in the bitter cold water, my body became covered with goose bumps. Man, did I want to get out! I stayed in, however, and after a minute or so the water didn't feel as cold anymore. When I got out of the shower to go to school, believe it or not I felt really good. It was an I'm-glad-to-be-alive sort of feeling. I didn't hurt, and wasn't stiff, and was so revitalized and rejuvenated that I felt like I could take on anything. I had a very fine time that day, so the next morning I did the same thing and kept turning the shower to cold every morning after that.

I believe Touching Spirit Bear had such an impact on me, because it is about a boy who is the same age as me so I can understand him, his choices, and the way he is trying to find himself.

Your book is the only novel that has ever had a physical effect on me or has caused such mental changes in the way I think and act. In actuality your book has made me more aware of how I live my life and how I treat others. Touching Spirit Bear has made me a more caring, better person. I hope everyone reads it sometime in their life. It is beautiful--a wonderful book.

Sincerely,



Matthew Voorhees, Grade 8