

Dear Jerry Spinelli,

Even though I am not exactly a speed reader, your book *Loser* has definitely spoken to me, and I have heard what it has to say loud and clear. Looking back, you could say that I didn't have very much self-esteem in my elementary school years. I always seemed to look at the negative side of things, and I remember that I somehow got the impression that everybody hated me. But most of all I would call myself a pathetic loser.

I beat myself up for about three years with little sign of stopping, and it looked like my life would be like a swirling black hole for years to come. However, all that quickly changed when I picked up your book. The title really caught my eye because of my low self-esteem, and I thought that by seeing what advice it had, even though I couldn't seem to stay positive, I could reach a breakthrough and be content with my existence just like everyone else. How right I was; that paperback book taught a very important lesson: no matter what will slow you down on your way, you and everyone can always lead a fabulous and successful life.

I have a little brother named Austin, and Donald Zinkoff reminds me of him in many ways. No, he doesn't have an upside-down valve in his stomach, and he doesn't laugh at everything he sees. In fact, it barely takes anything to set him off with fury. He is autistic, which means he has several disabilities, and I, at times, can find him as annoying as Mrs. Biswell does Zinkoff. In fact, he is a significant part of why I used to hate my life. We might not see eye to eye, but we can learn to get past each other, many thanks to *Loser*.

When I started reading your book. I was intrigued by Zinkoff's characteristics and how content he was with his life, and that certainly sent me a big message. When he was playing soccer whilst his teammates called him "Wild Foot," I was happy, sad, and fascinated simultaneously. It took me by surprise that he had his own special way of constantly keeping his chin up, and I felt like he was a role model for me. I really wanted to learn from him, so I made a goal for myself: to constantly look at the positive side of things and keep on keeping on.

That is a goal I apply to this day. Thanks to you and your book, I have been taught the true meaning of happiness, success, and true friendship. Now, I'm part of a big circle of friends and I love my life. Also, I'm first saxophone in the school band, a singer in the chorus, a principal role in the school play, and student council treasurer. Without *Loser*. I might never have gotten off my feet, and thanks to you, I have made the most of my existence.

Sincerely,

*Nathan Wild*