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Level I Semifinalist

Letter to Hope Solo concerning her book, Hope Solo: My Story

Dear Hope Solo:

Dash, trip, fall, ow! were words that were always slipping out of my mouth before I read your book, *Hope Solo: My Story*. I was a clumsy person, who thought she was horrible at all sports, and I felt that I must accept this as my destiny. I simply believed that being clumsy was a part of who I was. After I read your book, though, I began to realize that being clumsy was something that I could overcome with practice. I soon became more agile by joining my classmates to play soccer at recess. When I did, I realized my inner yearning to take part I games with the rest of my classmates. I can hardly wait until the next chance to compete against my classmates in soccer. After reading your book, I also became stronger, both mentally and physically. Before, I would “suffer” from minor cuts and bruises. After reading about your serious shoulder injury, I felt ashamed about my little injuries. I have learned to laugh my way through bigger injuries like a hit in the head, bent glasses and a hard kick in the shins. The latter put me in a sprain bandage for a few days, but it didn’t damage my enthusiasm for the sport.

Your book has also helped me to realize one major factor that has caused me to grow socially. I used to think that everyone was out to get me and that no one like me. I would sit in my own corner, feeling sorry for myself. I would come home crying every day, and soon I was a lonely person because of my own way of thinking. After I read *Hope Solo: My Story*, though, I realized that life is like a soccer game. I have to make the correct choices and work with those around me. I have to move forward, but not sell myself too short. I must be courteous, but not go out of the way to help those who try to take advantage of me. As a winning soccer team does I must push my way through life and work hard.

In addition to this important life lesson, your book helped me to develop my strategies for playing soccer. I had once thought of soccer as a game where players just kick the ball, pass it to their teammates and try to score goals. After reading your book, I realized that its lessons go much deeper than skill and technique; soccer players works as a team, but each member must also stand up for herself. I learned that without being rude, I, too, can stand up for myself, my ideas and my beliefs. No one else has the right to make fun of them. I, in turn, need to respect the values that others treasure. Thank you so much for writing *Hope Solo: My Story*. You not only have helped me to become a better soccer player, you have equipped me for the game of life.

Sincerely,

Shruthi Ravichandran