

Caleb Hans  
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Dear Trenton Lee Stewart,


In your book, *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, I felt that my mind was completely immersed in your words. I was solving the riddles and contemplating what I think would happen next. Many helpful life lessons were clearly illustrated in your book, influencing me and changing the way I view my family and friends, because I used to take them for granted. After I read your book, I felt inspired to act out of selflessness, not selfishness. I now almost fully understand the benefits of teamwork, and working in a group is hard for an introverted person like me.

Before reading *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, I always took my family and friends for granted, because they were always "there". My family was "there" to pay the bills, they were "there" to do the laundry, and my friends were "there" to make me laugh. I stopped one moment in your book and thought about Reynie as an orphan. Then I realized what a huge mistake I had made for taking them all for granted. I would never be able to cope with not having dependable friends and a guiding, loving, and caring family.

Many people (including me) have taken actions on behalf of their own interests, even though it could be consequential for others and maybe themselves. Your book inspired me to try to be more selfless than selfish. I feel now that I want to do more service projects to help people who are less fortunate than me. I notice that even if helping someone may not have a tangible benefit for yourself, you will most likely feel good for supporting them.

I prefer to work alone, rather than as part of a group. I sometimes get too skeptical about others' ideas. For instance, we recently had a science project to build a roller coaster for a marble to go through and I found myself doubting the design of another classmate. In your book, teamwork between the four children is essential for their mission to be a success. If there is an outlier my group, I now try to work harder and cooperate with them more than before I read your book. I am currently participating in drama club to improve my social skills, and after I read *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, I have increased my efforts to be more involved in my cast.

Some people do not feel changed after they have read a book, but I certainly have changed after reading *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. I feel like a whole new person after reading your wonderful book. I have changed for the better, that is for sure. I will try to never take my friends and family for granted again, try my best to be selfless, and try to get along better in a group. I want to say thank you for how your book affected me in many positive ways. I treasure my changed self, and that is why I am sharing with you.

Sincerely,  
  
Caleb Hans, Grade 7