

“DEFYING GRAVITY” Essay Contest Finalist

“Defying what’s wrong and doing what’s right”

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Sometimes what seems right at one time isn’t always right. *Some people think if you follow someone else’s lead or hang with the “in crowd” you’ll be cool, but being cool isn’t always right. When you become someone’s friend do not look at them but look at their heart and friends will always find you.* This is where my story begins.

Over the summer I went to camp. I was very excited to go swimming and much more. I got out of the van to a very peaceful lake with lots of kids my age and younger running around. I felt right at home. I dropped my stuff off at the “teens” bunk house and scrambled down to the lake to meet my counselors and the rest of my new peers. I came to the lake sort of surprised. Most of the teens were huddled into clicks texting and gossiping. At that time I had no cell-phone so I couldn’t text and nor did I want to gossip, so I walked over to a girl who was doing neither. She was dressed in neon colors and looked quite sad considering she was at camp, usually a place where you are happy. I thought she need a smiling face to talk to, me!

I said “Hi, my name is Natalie. What’s your name? She looked up, very surprised to see me and said her name was Katie. She had short, red curly hair with lots and lots of freckles! She had obviously, fake purple and blonde highlights running through her hair. She had bright blue eye shadow on and had hot pink braces. Her cheeks were very pink and she had Harry Potter style glasses. I’ve got to admit she was a sight.

She was sitting on an over turned log so I plopped down next to her. Super quietly she asked “why are you talking to me?” She said it like she had never had a friend before. I was quite startled by this question but I knew I should answer. Being so surprised the only word that came to mind was “because”. I know it sounds stupid but I couldn’t think of anything else at that moment. *She said no one talks to her or sits next to her. She said because she was “too different”. Just then I realized she had a blue hearing aid and her body was a little out of*

proportion. I had been picked on since kindergarten and knew what it was like to be rejected so I understood how she felt. I said “I like you just the way you are!” A huge smile light up her face.

That morning we went swimming and canoeing. But at lunch we were separated. Her assigned lunch table was at the other lunch house. I was stuck with a bunch girls texting and gossiping. I had no choice but to work up the courage to say ‘Hi’. They looked at me like I had three eyes and was from outer space. Maybe hi is a foreign language to them but I maintained my cool. Then a tall girl with long blonde hair and designer frames, most likely the leader of the clan, said “Why do you hang with Katie?” I told her because she is nice. They all started laughing and saying horrible things about her! I was utterly disgusted by the hateful comments so I immediately asked to be reassigned to a different table. They said no, then asked why. I didn’t have the heart to tattle so I just said never mind.

After lunch Katie and I did crafts, played Ping Pong, and played tennis. Then it was the end of the day. We hugged good-bye and got into separate vans. I was so mad at those girls. I wanted to tell them off so bad! Fighting and violence is not the answer though. That causes more trouble so I got that solution out of my head fast. I didn’t want to tattle and I wasn’t sure what my parents would say so that night I tried thinking of a solution to our dilemma.

Over the next couple of days the teasing got worse but Katie didn’t want me to tell anyone. She said she could handle it but obviously she couldn’t. I wanted the teasing to end and everything to go back to normal again. I wanted the girls to go to a different camp so I wouldn’t have to ever see or hear from them again. Then I came to an idea.

I decided to leave her alone. We’d still be friends just not in camp. So that day I said hi but stayed away from her. She was angry and now hated me and told me to get lost. She trusted me and said I was being just as bad as the other girls. I was. I had broken the bond we’d shared. I was so mad I could ever do that to someone. It was wrong and I had known that. I had to fix things.

As soon as I saw the girls teasing her I ran to a counselor. I told her everything. I explained the teasing, the agitating whispers behind our backs, everything. The counselor was just as mad about the situation as me. Katie and I made up and were friends for the rest of camp. I had defied gravity in my own way and was “through accepting limits”. I had to look at the big picture.

From that experience I learned to “defy gravity”. *I know now what listening to your heart means and to not just go with what is cool but do what is right.* “No wizard that there is or was is ever going to bring us down!”

By: Natalie Dahl