

January 4, 2021

Dear John Green,

Your book, Turtles All The Way Down, is one of the most eye-opening books I have ever read. It has changed my perspective on the world so much, and it has continued to make me ask more questions instead of being quiet.

People don't normally talk about mental health. In my own experience it has always been "oh they're doing it for attention" or "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry, I hope you get better soon!" But that's not how it really is, and most people don't have the courage to talk about how it really is. But you did, and that's why your book has been so inspirational to me.

One of the perspectives this book gave me, was a different view on mental health. This book showed me that if someone is struggling with their mental health, it isn't something as simple as they hate themselves, it is so much more than that. They could think that they aren't good enough, or they don't know or understand who they are. Maybe they are scared, scared of something that isn't a physical object, or something that no one else even bothers to think about. Scared or wondering about something that will take those they love away. Getting quieter and quieter until you only talk in your head. The thoughts are what controls you. Feeling like the worst will always come, and that you have no control. These things are what people are going through, and this book has shown me that if it makes others uncomfortable while listening, then it needs to be said.

The story of Aza and the struggle she goes through has been a dose of reality, and I'm understanding what struggling with mental health is like thanks to this book. The way she looks at the world and describes her thoughts is astounding. Near the end of the book, she says, "Imagine you're trying to find someone, or something, or even yourself, but you have no senses, no way to know where the walls are, which way is forward or backward, what is water and what is air. You're senseless and shapeless- you feel like you can only describe what you are by identifying what you are not, and you're floating around in a body with no control. You don't get to decide... You're just stuck in there totally alone, in this darkness. That's scary." That's how Aza described her thoughts and her mind to Daisy, and it really helped me see the pain people go through, even when it's not physical pain.

The spiral that you used to describe Aza's thoughts and actions was an amazing comparison. It made me stop and think about things in a way I never have before. For example, life. We wake up, go to school or work or any other obligation we have for eight hours, come home, eat, and go to bed. The cycle never stops, and it will dominate the lives of generations to come. The spiral will continue, and we will go along with it.

This book has made me more aware of the effects 2020 has had on my own generation. Before I read the book, I didn't think about how quarantine and COVID will affect my generation's mental health and how we will move on from this. After reading this book, I immediately became more aware of these things and I began to wonder if we will function differently after what we've been through and will we be able to handle stress better or maybe worse after what everyone had to go through this last year. After reading this I noticed I began to ask a lot more questions and notice things on how people act under stress and how others cope. This book has made a difference in me.

Your book has made me wonder and ask many new questions, and it has expanded my knowledge on even my own mental health. It helped me look at things in a new way, and I hope that by telling my friends to read this book, it can help them, and others look at things in a new way too. I am so glad I got to read Turtles All The Way Down.

Sincerely,

Abbi Odell