

Advance Praise for...

You're Amazing And I'll Prove It!

My favorite part of the book was the comparing, because it was fun!

—Lisanne, age 9

The Prologue was outstanding and pulled me into the book.

—Emma, age 12

I loved the book. It is very informative. I don't believe that it is purely a children's book. I think it could be used in any situation with adults who have preset prejudices. I could see it used in Sunday school classes as well. This is an important message that needs to reach as many as possible.

—Grandma D

I learned from the book that no matter what you look like or act like, we are all really the same inside.

—Sydney, age 12

My favorite part of the book was where they explain what everything is better at/meant for.

—Alexander, age 10

Neal's message is a timely one. He addresses the problem of intolerance in ways that young people can understand and relate to. His real-life experiences open a discussion for readers to explore their own feelings and experiences.

—Susan Carlson, 3rd grade teacher

Sam really enjoyed the book—especially the longer stories. I was a bit surprised, in fact, because Sam is usually a kid who likes graphic novels, so I didn't know what he would think. He was particularly intrigued by the stories involving basketball!

—Heidi, Sam's mom

Read the Prologue and you will be HOOKED!

***You're Amazing
And I'll Prove It!***

Neal G. Brownell

**Illustrated by
Rich Molinelli**

**Knowledge Is Freedom
Publishing**

You're Amazing And I'll Prove It!

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Manufactured in the United States of America

First Printing: 2018

Knowledge Is Freedom Publishing

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ISBN # 978-0-9998376-1-0

Library of Congress Control Number 2018913523

Dedication & Acknowledgments

I want to thank all of the amazing people whose influence helped me with this book. Starting with my late wife, Debra C. Kading Brownell (Deb, aka Hunskybunsky). Without your love, compassion, and tenacity, I would not even be here. I miss you. I didn't give you permission to die, but I know for a fact I will see you again.

To my wife, Linda Mae Wilson Brownell (Linda, aka Sweetiebeetie), whom I not only love with every fiber of my being, I also like every ounce of who you are. I look forward to waking up and spending my days with you. I thank your mom, Esther, for sending you to me. This book would not have happened without the love and joy you bring to my life.

To my best friend Dave Lewis: Thank you for taking the time to put the final pieces in place. These final pieces allowed me to become who I am.

To Helen Fleming, who, at the ripe old age of 12/13, did all of the preliminary drawings for this book. Without your help, I would not have been able to finish this book. It was a joy and a pleasure to work with someone so gifted. We look forward to seeing great things from you in the future.

Last, but not least, I want to thank everyone I have ever known. All of you have influenced my life in such amazing and awe-inspiring ways. Because of you, I see the world as the incredible, wondrous place it is meant to be.

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PROLOGUE

**Doorway to
Knowledge
& Freedom**

**Open for
Business**

Prologue

Question: *How do you tell someone that everyone is special and then get them to internalize, understand, believe, and then act on this new knowledge?*

Answer: You don't tell the person—you have to show them. You have to get the person engaged by asking questions. Questions like, "Who's better? Is a brightly colored bird better than a dull plain brown bird?" You then show the two birds sitting on a nest with eggs in it and ask the same questions again. Once you've had the person answer, you show them that both birds are from the same family. One is a male and one is a female and the two birds are equally important to the survival of the babies. This is just one of many questions *You're Amazing And I'll Prove It!* asks to show the reader how everything and everyone has special attributes that make them unique and exceptionally important.

Entwined with the questions, *You're Amazing And I'll Prove It!* has real-life stories about seemingly unremarkable people doing extraordinary things. *You're Amazing And I'll Prove It!* shows the reader how each and every one of us has extraordinary gifts given to us at birth.

Knowledge and acceptance of oneself, as well as others, is freedom. *You're Amazing And I'll Prove It!* engages readers to the point where they internalize, understand, and believe—and then are able to act on the knowledge that all people are exceptionally special. It shows that, regardless of race, age, gender, religion, or any other difference you can find, by accepting others, we are giving freedom not only to the people around us, but also to ourselves.

As you look around our amazing world, you see a myriad of things that are made by both Mother Nature and by man. You see animals, plants and insects, as well as lamps, tables, planes, helicopters, and ships. Most of these animals, plants, insects, planes, and helicopters come in different sizes, colors, and shapes. Although each of these things is similar in some ways, they are very different in others. For instance, let's say you have two dogs—one of them is a large Great Dane and the other is a Chihuahua. They are both dogs, and that makes them the same. However, one is big and the other is small, which makes them different.

In the first part of this book, we are going to look at and compare eight different groupings. Each one of the animals, plants, or man-made objects will have a similar animal, plant, or man-made object next to it. All I want you to do is compare the two objects. Once you have looked at the two objects, I want you to answer one simple question: "Is object A better than object B, or is B better than A?"

In the next part of this book, we will look at the same things and discuss why you answered the way you did.

Before we get started, I want to take a moment to congratulate you on being an exceptionally special person. I already know you are an extraordinary person, whether you know you are or not. Keep reading and I will prove it to you.

Now we can get started. Turn the page.

ROOM 5

**Real Life You're
*Amazing***

*This is
Awesome*

In three of the first four rooms, we looked at different things, animals, and people. We have seen the very thing that is an advantage in one situation can be a disadvantage in another. We also have seen that when the advantages of one thing, animal, or person are used in connection with the advantages of another's, extraordinary things can happen.

In this next section, let's look at real-life experiences. These situations show that not only can advantages be used to achieve extraordinary things, but perceived disadvantages can actually be an advantage. They also show how judging someone by their disadvantages can hurt the person who is doing the judging.

What I Learned From a Game

Unexpected Hero!

When I was growing up, I tried out for different sports. I tried baseball and was pretty good at it. However, because my family moved to different parts of the country every few years, I was always the new kid. The other kids ridiculed me all the time. Even though I was pretty good at baseball, with all the ridicule, I quit the team.

I then tried other sports and ran into the same new-kid-on-the-block ridiculing. I would join and then quit. Out of all the sports—baseball, football, etc.—basketball was my least favorite. In fact, I hated basketball. One day when I was in fifth grade, my school announced there was going to be an in-school basketball league. They also told us all we had to do was show up at practice and we would automatically be put on a team. For some unknown reason, I decided I was going to try playing this game I hated.

When I showed up, I was placed on a team named the Blazers. They told me to go shoot around. I was terrible. Not only did I not know any of the rules, I didn't even know the positions the players played on the court. When I was told I was going to play the forward position, I asked them, "What is a forward?" The coach, as well as all the kids on the team, laughed at me. They told me I was dumb for not knowing what a forward was. It was obvious I had no knowledge of the game or any natural talent for basketball.

The ridicule started immediately. They called me every hurtful name you could think of.

There were only two rules every team had to follow. The first rule was no one could be kicked off a team. The second rule was

What I Learned From a Game

every kid on the team had to play in every game. So that meant they could not get rid of me, and they had to let me play in every game. Right in front of me, they told me I was so bad that they could never win with me on the team.

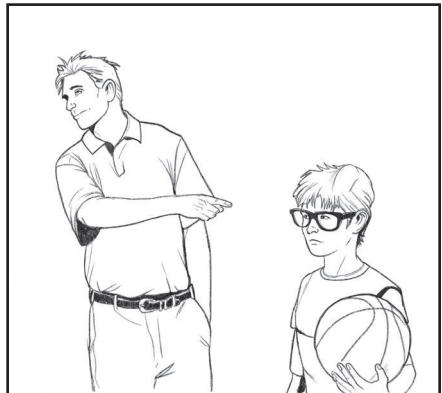
That night, I went home and cried. I wanted so badly to quit. I then took a good look at myself. I had quit everything I joined because it was hard dealing with all the ridicule. I told myself, "Neal, if you quit this, you'll be a quitter all your life." Through my tears, I told myself I was going to hang in there for the entire season no matter what.

The next day, I forced myself to go to practice. To this day, I don't know how my team did it, but they were able to trade me to another team. They told me, "We got rid of you. We don't want you on our team. Now that you are gone, we will be a winning team!" You can imagine how that made me feel.

My new team was called the Suns. When I went to the practice for my new team, they were just as belittling.

The coach introduced me to the team by saying, "Look who we have to have on our team. Now we will never win." I started crying right in front of them, but I didn't quit. I was going to stick with it all the way to the end of the season.

I went home and put a hoop up on the side of my clubhouse and started practicing. My clubhouse was just a little playhouse my little brother and



What I Learned From a Game

I had built. The hoop was only about eight feet high, but that was better than nothing.

By the end of the season, after practicing on my own and playing with my team, I was still terrible; in fact, I hadn't made even one basket all season long.

In spite of how bad I was and that they had to let me play in every game, the Suns made it to the school's championship game. Guess who the team was that we had to play for the championship? You guessed it. We had to play my first team, the Blazers—the team that was so happy to get rid of me.

The game was close all the way through and I hadn't played at all. With only a few minutes left, my coach, who was an eighth grader, looked at my teammates and said, "Well, now I guess we lose the game. We have to let Neal play." The coach told me, "Neal, I want you to stay away from the ball and stay out of the way. If you stay out of the way, we might be able to win." With only a few seconds on the clock, my team was losing by one point. One of my teammates took a shot that missed. Even though I really wasn't part of the game, I was in the right place at the right time. The rebound fell into my hands. I threw the ball up underhanded and the ball went through the hoop as time ran out. That's right. The only basket the kid no one wanted on their team made all year long was the winning basket in the championship game. My teammates went nuts, cheering and hugging me.

Although I was still terrible, a strange thing happened that year. I fell in love with the game of basketball.

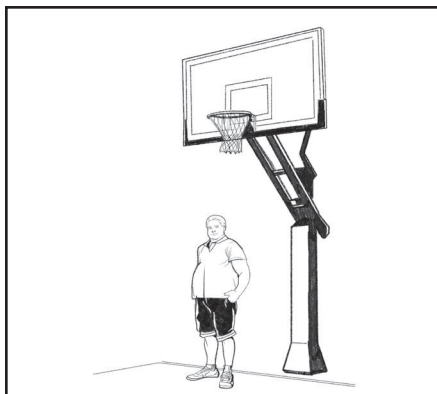
This leads me to ask the question: Which one of the players on my team was the most valuable player? Even though the other kids were better players, my team would not have won the

What I Learned From a Game

championship if I had quit. Also, if the Blazers had not deliberately traded me, they might have won the championship game.

The first lesson I learned from basketball was that regardless of a person's skill level, everyone can contribute as long as they never give up. If you really want something, never give up.

Everyone Is Special



I continued to practice all the time. Little by little, I slowly got better. With all the practicing and hard work, by the time I was a senior in high school, I was not only one of the best players in the school, I was one of the best players in our league.

Every year, all the boys in the school had to play basketball in gym class. Each class picked teams and played against each other. In order to pick these teams, we needed captains. I was chosen to be one of the captains. As captain, I had to pick the players I wanted on my team.

Each captain took turns picking players from the class one at a time until everyone was picked. One of the players I picked was

What I Learned From a Game

a boy named Bobby. Most of the kids in our school did not like Bobby. The other kids said he was dumb. He had no athletic abilities. Everyone in gym class told me he was going to be useless as a basketball player. I told them they were wrong, and I would prove it to them. I had no idea how Bobby was going to help my team. I just had a feeling that Bobby would make a difference.

Bobby had many natural talents, but sports wasn't one of them. It was very obvious Bobby hated sports and gym was the worst class he had to take. As we played our games, the other kids mocked Bobby. With all the mocking, Bobby wouldn't even try. Bobby walked up and down the court with his hands in his pockets. I told Bobby not to listen to the other kids. I told him to hang in there, and he would make a difference when it really counted.

After playing a number of games, my team was the best gym team in the school and was chosen to play against an all-star team. The all-star team was filled with players from my high school senior team. Everyone told me that there was no way we could beat such a good team, even if Bobby wasn't on our team. However, with Bobby as one of our players, we might as well not show up. I told them to watch and see.

The game was very close all the way through. Bobby just walked up and down the court the way he always did. After playing almost the entire game, the game was tied with only 26 seconds left on the clock. Guess who fouled out? That's right, I fouled out of the game and the other team had possession of the ball. They could run the clock down to the last few seconds before they had to shoot.

I called a time-out. All my teammates huddled around me except Bobby. I called him over and told my team this was Bobby's time. I told the other three players that I wanted them to play the

What I Learned From a Game

best defense they had ever played. “Do not foul, and do not let them score.”

I then told Bobby I wanted him to stand under our basket at the other end of the court and act like he wasn't part of the game. In other words, act the way he always did—standing with his hands in his pockets, showing no interest in the game.

I then told the other three players when the all-star team took their shot, I wanted all three of them to crash the boards, get the rebound, turn immediately, and throw the ball to Bobby. I told Bobby, “No one is going to be paying any attention to you. You will be wide open all by yourself. All you have to do is catch the ball and make a layup.”

Well, that's exactly what happened: Bobby caught the ball and made a layup to win the game against the best players in the high school. As I said before, this all-star team was made up of players from my high school senior team. Just to let you know how good this all-star team was, our high school team won the league title that year and were ranked among the top teams in the state.

Bobby felt like a million dollars and the all-stars couldn't believe that Bobby, the boy everyone said was useless, beat them.

This brings us to the next question: Who was the most valuable player on my gym team? Was it me, the best player on our team who fouled out of the game? On the other hand, was it Bobby, the player who made the winning basket with me on the bench? You also have to consider the fact that the play I set up would not have worked if Bobby was not Bobby. We would not have won the game without him.

What I Learned From a Game

The second lesson I learned from basketball was that you never know how valuable any one person may be. Never judge a person based on what they can't do. Always look for what they can do. Nurture a person's strengths, and you will be amazed at what they will contribute—not just to your life, but to other people's lives as well.

Never underestimate anyone. Everyone is special.

You're the Second-Best Team

When I was a sophomore in high school, I was the sixth man on the school's junior varsity (JV) basketball team. For people who don't know anything about basketball, each team can have 12 active players. Out of these 12, each team is only allowed 5 players on the court at any given time. Being the sixth man meant there were five players who started the game (known as the Starting 5), and then I would be the first player off the bench to be inserted into the game. The remaining six players on the bench are considered the second team. The second team on my JV team primarily played when we were so far ahead in points that the game had already been won. In other words, the second team rarely, if ever, played when there was pressure to perform.

The first team of my sophomore JV team was a great team. We won most of our games by 15 to 20 points. In fact, we were so good that we beat our school's varsity team in a scrimmage. Oh,

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Thanks in advance.

You're Amazing!

About the Author



Neal G. Brownell is the inventor of "The Bandit™," a basketball shooting accuracy trainer that puts your arm in the proper shooting position every time. For ten years he and his first wife Debra ran Brownell Enterprises, selling The Bandit™ and a number of programs he wrote to coach kids interested in playing basketball. These programs include Laser Shot™ (a shooting and rebounding program), Skybound™ (this program helps improve on your jumping ability and your all-around game) and Mental Power™ (you must be mentally prepared to win) to name a few. If you would like to obtain "The Bandit™" or any of these programs for the young basketball star in your life, please send an e-mail to nealgbrownell@gmail.com. He has also coached basketball on an individual basis.

Neal loves helping people to better their lives. He currently lives in the Catskills with second wife, Linda and their two Pit Bull mixes: Mercy and Mr. Brown.