Dear Howard,

My name is Mackenzie, and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio. I am almost 18 years old and a senior. I’m in the welding program but that is not what I want to do after I graduate. I’m not entirely sure what I want to do after I graduate, honestly. I’ve been to 3 different schools, Girard, Brookfield, and Hubbard. I’m about to move and change schools again though. This time Joseph Badger. I have to make new friends again and leave my old ones.

I would like to thank you for serving our country and being as heroic as you were. I really appreciate everything you have done and I find it inspiring. You managed to go through everything that you did in the military, and then manage to come home and figure out how you want to readjust your life. It makes me realize that I don’t need to have my life put together straight out of high school, knowing what job I want to have the rest of my life. I can take some time to figure it out.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was how well you handled negative experiences in life. Every time I get hit with something little, I bottle it up but eventually that bottle breaks whenever a few more little things happen. You went through everything you did and never once just broke down crying from a little inconvenience. When my close friend, Nate, passed away I thought the world was ending. He was the last person I had any real feelings for then he took his own life. I still haven’t managed to wrap my brain around it even though it happened on August 26th, 2018. I’m realizing that there are worse things in the world but life will also continue on. It’ll all be okay.

Something I didn't know soldiers experienced was how their life was when they returned home. I didn’t know people could treat soldiers so badly. When at war, people are risking their lives for other citizens to live how they want to live but once they return home, soldiers get treated so awful most of the time. Between others pointing out flaws and battle scars and the soldier being hard on themselves, I don’t know what’s worse. I just feel like you’d lose all respect for everyone, especially yourself. I think you’re very brave. Thank you for using your time to serve for my country and myself.

Respectfully,

Mackenzie

Dear Howard,

My name is Kayla and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio. I’m a seventeen year old senior in the Dental Assisting program here. I have a passion for helping others with even the slightest problems in life; I’m always there for my friends and my family when they need me. I’m naturally great listener. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I also enjoy spending free time painting my nails, doing makeup, and watching youtubers. I work at an Indian Restaurant in Niles Ohio, Bombay Curry And Grill where I have learned many things about myself such as caring about every detail that goes into making sure the customers are happy, people in general many frequent customers walk and say “Hi” with a big smile and wave me down to come take their orders it a special feeling that they want me to take their order, I know it probably doesn’t make much sense to feel that way but it does. I’m kind to anyone I have ever met; I’m just that type of person.

I would like to thank you for serving our country and putting yourself in harms way every single day just so I can live a life where I’m not scared that I may be blown up today. Another thing I would like to thank you for is the awesome book you have written. I’m in love with the book and how honest it is with the rare truth of your personal life and growing up physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was no matter how hard today is you still get another chance tomorrow, like no matter how much pain a person faces as it will end it may not be today, tomorrow, next week, it might take a while for that pain to go away but it will eventually. Another thing that stood out to me and that is very relatable to me personally is that no matter what a person goes through in life they shouldn’t hold it against other people and become bitter people need to learn how to take pain and turn it into strength and not more hurt. Many people can’t do this, many people shut people out and don’t want help because they feel even more weak then what there already feeling but it’s okay to receive help, people turn to drugs and alcohol to help with pain, people commit suicide because they feel so hurt, it shouldn’t be this way. Even though pain hurts and makes people want to close themselves off, people need to use it to make themselves stronger. Many people say Why God, why me? I say there is a reason behind everything we may not know but someone does.

Respectfully, Kayla

Dear Howard,

My name is Arianna, and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio.  I’m a 17 year senior, and I go here in hopes of becoming a Pharmacy Technician. My homeschool is Niles and I run track, I run the 100m, 200m, 400m and their corresponding relays.  I like to do hair and read and my favorite subject is English.

I would like to thank you for putting yourself in dangerous situations that I could only imagine. I’d also like to thank you for writing a book from our perspective with events that are personal to you, because it makes me feel a closer to you in some ways. I really appreciate the honesty and authenticity of your book.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was the fact that you’d been shot several time in very heinous ways and places and still continued on, to save yourself and others. This made me realize that my basic problems as a teenager aren’t as dramatic as they seem, and that it could definitely be worse.

I really do appreciate you and every soldier that risk themselves on the daily, so protect me and my *not as bad as they seem* problems. I aspire to have the confidence, drive, and determination that you had and have. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Arianna

Dear Howard,

My name is Parker and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio. I’m 18 years old and from Niles Ohio, where I played baseball, and ran cross country. Now, I’m currently working full time as a welder. I also just recently joined the Navy and contracted as a Seabee.

I would like to thank you for your drive to inspire and help others. It’s been fortunate to have men like you in our culture and in my personal life (Baseball Coaches) that have taught me to have a never quit attitude and to have a purpose and commitment for everything I do. Your teachings will help me through boot camp. I can’t thank you enough.

Respectfully,

Parker

Hooyah

Dear Howard,

My name is Joshua and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio.  I am 17 and working through the Electrical Technology program. I have already made my obligation to the United States Army. At this point I’m just waiting to graduate so I can ship out on the 24th of June.

I would like to thank you for your amazing dedication to get through all of the problems thrown at you, from your home life to BUD/S to the Battle of Mogadishu. Even when the odds were stacked against you, you never faltered.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was how you went against direct orders to help that kid who had his legs blown off. It took guts to go against orders to help some random kid you didn’t even know. My only hope is that I can be half the man you are someday.

Respectfully,

Joshua

Dear Howard,

My name is Breanna and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio. I’m an 18 year old senior, and I have come to TCTC to help further my education in the Exercise Science field. After I graduate I plan to attend college for Radiation Therapy. During my High school career I have juggled helping my single mother of three, I have managed a part time job at Dairy Queen and Dollar General, with also playing volleyball, basketball, track and this year I’m doing softball as well and I was unable to do basketball due to shoulder surgery.

I would like to thank you for sharing your story and your personal life. You gave me the courage and mindset that it will be okay. My father has been absent most my life. He is a heavy drinker who has been in and out of my life many times and even when he is in it he really isn’t. I have watched him since I was 4 years old hurt my mother, my siblings and also myself. I had to see many things in life but my mother had got us out of that at a young age. It all made me stronger but because of you I will never let him hold me back from what I love to do.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was you always kept going know matter what. You had been shot many times but you always pushed through it. You never stopped until you literally couldn’t keep going. You should you should always keep fighting know matter what.

I want to thank you for putting yourself out there to protect your family and our country. It takes a lot to do that and you are a very strong person. I truly look up to you.

Respectfully,

Breanna

Dear Howard,

My name is Bethany, and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio.  I’m an 18 year old senior, and I attend here in hopes of becoming a Veterinarian. My homeschool is Lakeview and I don’t do any active activities at my homeschool and I’m just being honest. I have a brother in the Marines who has served for six years now and he just re-enlisted this year. He is now stationed at Camp Pendleton in California. I haven’t got to see him in two years which has been rough on me but I know he’ll be home soon. I have two beautiful nephews that I love dearly. My one nephew Jesse he’s four now and my brother and his wife just recently had another named DJ. I have a sister that served in the Army for three years and she has a beautiful son named Oliver. It’s hard having family in the military especially when they live far away because you miss out on a lot. When my brother is home he mostly spends time with his wife and kids and he’ll FaceTime me and my mom so I can see my nephews. I do get to see both of my siblings through FaceTime but at least I see them.

I would like to thank you for risking your life for our country. People take a lot for granted until they finally realize how much we have. Being the first soldier to write a book about your experiences really inspired me because you didn’t only go through all of that stuff you went through it twice in writing. That probably took a lot to write about such a moment and I’d like to say that truly makes you a strong person. Emotions are about the hardest thing a human has to overcome in life and I know sometimes they get the best of me. I could only imagine what happens to soldiers every day. For you to overcome such a time makes me realize that if you truly put your mind to things you’ll get through it and you will make it. Thank you for teaching me the importance of life and showing me that pain can be overcome and they can be shut down.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was that you took pain as if it was nothing. You were able to shut down all of it. That made me think that sometimes all you have to do is let it go. Pain can only be felt if you let it be felt. That’s what I’ve learned is that if you let it get to you and you acknowledge it, it will only get worse. If you forget it, the pain will go away and it will be easier to get through. “Pain demands to be felt”. That quote really hit me hard because I know what pain feels like and now I know if you don’t let it be felt it won’t hurt you.

Respectfully, Bethany

Dear Howard,

My name is Brianna and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio. I’m currently enrolled in the Cosmetology program. My home school is Liberty. I enjoy reading and cooking in my spare time.

I would like to thank you for your service. I’d also like to thank you for writing Seal Team Six. I really enjoyed reading it in class. It opened my mind and perspective about the drive, responsibility, and determination that it takes to be a soldier.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was the fact that you didn’t listen to orders and helped the child who lived next to where you were stationed. It took a lot of courage to do what you did for him. You saved his life and many more throughout your journey.

Something I didn't know soldiers experienced was the effects after. I never really thought about the post effects of being in an active war, being injured, and then returning home to live a normal life. Some turn to bad habits to help cope, but you did not. You made something out of yourself and I respect your drive and ability to return home and better society even more after war.

Respectfully,

Brianna

Dear Howard,

My name is Tyler and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio. Currently I am enrolled in the engineering program. I am looking into Youngstown state university for a four year program in industrial engineering. I have a girlfriend who I plan on marrying in the next few years and hopefully we will start a family someday. She is also looking into YSU but for sports medicine. We plan on having a house of our own and three children one day.

I would like to thank you for your service in the military for starters. I know that you sacrificed everything just to keep our country safe and that must have been a very difficult decision to make.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was the difficult decisions you had to make on a regular basis. You had to decide to kill a woman who looked like she was carrying a baby but was carrying a mortar. You had to make a decision to kill an old man who was also carrying mortar rounds, but you later found out that he was being forced to do it.

Something I didn't know soldiers experienced was face to face encounters with woman and children that could potentially be a threat to your life. I would never be able to do the things that you did to protect the country. I thank you for your service, the risks you chose to take, the difficult decisions you had to make, and most of all I thank you for the sacrifices you made to protect our country.

Respectfully,

Tyler

Dear Howard,

My name is Dylan and I am a senior from Trumbull Career and Technical Center, located in northeast Ohio.  I’m basically just gamer who is thinking about going into the military, specifically the Navy. I love to make people happy when I can and hate it when I can’t help people.

I would like to thank you for showing me that not all problems are as bad as we all think they are. It’s all about how big you make the problem. My main problem is stressing out about being unable to get over someone, when I read about you being shot multiple times and all the surgeries and problems you had afterwards I knew that it could be a heck of a lot worse. First world problems like that are nothing compared to how bad it could be. Not all problems can kill you, and believe me you show that numerous times.

Something that stood out to me about your experience in the book was how you were able to push through all the abuse and crap you had growing up. Most people would probably have thrown in the towel and quit but you never did. That is extremely impressive considering how hard your childhood was. You are honestly an inspiration to me because that crap shouldn’t happen and you pushed through it. When my friends are struggling I remind them that they’re problems can’t kill them, just like how your childhood didn’t kill you.

Respectfully,

Dylan