

Dear Shel Silverstein,

Hope you had a wonderful thanksgiving!

When I planned to write a letter to the author of an influential book I read, I picked the Giving Tree immediately. This is the first book that helped me learn more about love, life and get into reading. But when I got home and told my mom about the book I picked, her reaction was along the lines of "A PICTURE BOOK??! You're in 6th grade and got influenced by a kindergarten picture book?". I was mad at her for saying that. Isn't the contents of the book more important than the format? I was sure I would convince her after she read the book with me.

The Giving Tree is a great book which taught me a lot of moral ideas. When the tree and the boy were young, they spent a lot of time together and enjoyed each other's companionship. When the boy grew up, he barely came back to the tree, and only came when he needed stuff, the tree was lonely. This made me sad because the boy used to love the tree very much, but then abandoned it. I could almost feel the tree's pain, and the boy's guilt. When the boy asked for something, the tree always provided it, which filled it with joy. And that satisfied boy too. But that made me sad again because the tree was always giving and the boy was always asking. In the end, the tree had given too much and the boy had gotten old. Then they both perished that made me have tears in my eyes. The only good thing is that the new tree started growing in the end.

I felt the relationship between the tree and the boy is very similar to my mom and me. When I was little, I wanted my mom to be with me all the time and never go to work. But as I grew up, I started to depend on my parents less and less. Eventually, I will leave home, except I don't want to be like the boy. I will call my parents all the time and visit whenever I can. I know my mom and dad would try to satisfy me whenever I ask, but I don't want to be like "the boy". I want to try to give back to "the tree" too, not just take from it. When my mom needs me when she is old, I want to be around her and take care of her. By giving and receiving, we can extend our happy lives longer.

The story is even similar to the relationship between humans and nature. For thousands of years, humans were living along with nature. People swam in the lakes and rivers, climbed the tree, hunted and gathered. These things represent how the tree would treat the boy and the boy would treat the tree in the beginning. But recently, people started to massively kill forests and animals for farming. We stopped thinking and visiting "the tree". We gave very little back to nature, especially compared to the amount of resources we took from it. Now we have done it.

We have cut off the "branches" and almost killed "the tree". The payback is global warming because we have used too many resources. This is the warning from nature that we should consider seriously. I am worried that eventually humans will become the old boy, and nature will become the stump, and we will all die. That would be the worst thing ever in human history.

The Giving Tree is a very important book for me and thanks for writing it as a picture book as well. It taught me how to understand beyond the article, showed me the cycle of life, and most importantly, taught me to give back the love others gave me when I barely can read in kindergarten. My mom totally agreed with me now after I read the book with her. If it wasn't for The Giving Tree, I would not have wondered about the relationship between giving and receiving and starting to give back.

Sincerely,
Aiden Zhang