



Teamwork: Less Me, More We

By: Aedyn Mackenzie

I love hockey. I mean, I r-e-a-l-l-y love hockey. I love hockey more than snow days, summer, or even Halloween candy! I love hockey so much that I wanted to play after my brother's funeral because I knew it would make me feel happy. I wanted to score a goal for him. I ended up scoring four.

I play center forward and I love the feeling when I get a breakaway skating in and out of players and trying to "top shelf" the puck. I love taking the risk to skate and score even if I miss.

At the end of the year we had a banquet where the coaches handed out awards. I was pretty sure I was going to get one because I was one of the lead scorers. They handed out five and when the last one was announced, I was devastated. It took everything within me not to cry. I bit my cheek and tried really hard to smile and be happy for my teammates that did get one.

When we got into the parking lot I was choking back the tears. I couldn't wait to get into the car and really let it all out. When we got home I had a long talk with my mom and told her how I felt before bed. I fell asleep with a crying headache.

When I woke up in the morning there was a card waiting for me on the kitchen table. When I opened it, I was astounded by what it said. I learned that it is inside of me to feel happy and it made a lot of sense.

Dearest Aedyn:

I just wanted to write you a note of encouragement because I know you felt disappointed about not getting an award tonight. Do you remember how I told you that everything happens for a reason? And, how most of the time, when we are in the moment of what we might think is unfair, we don't have the full picture? We only have the small square of the GPS screen like in Dad's car, not the whole life map. In the end, it is best to say, "It is what it is" and choose joy and happiness anyway. No one can ever take away your choice to choose to be happy regardless of what's going on around you.

Dad and I were talking tonight exchanging stories about how beautiful you are, how smart you are, how athletic, kind, and funny you are. And I was crying so much because you are just the whole package - "it" - everything! And what I realized and I hope you do too, is that you don't need an award to tell you how great you are. You are strong enough and smart enough to just know it and feel it in your soul.

Close your eyes. Put your hand on your heart. Breathe deeply until you feel your beautiful spirit floating up. When you do, love that moment. You only need to know in your heart. We know it.

Love you so, so, so, much.

Mom and Dad



P.S. I hope you love this card. We bought it in Ireland. If you read the back you'll learn about dreaming. Don't ever stop dreaming or believing that dreams come true, because they do! --Just not always in the timing we think they should! Love you more than words can say.

This year at our tournament when I was coming out of the change room, my coach grabbed my arm and told me that he doesn't measure our games by the goals that are scored. He told me that he appreciated that I could play defensively and set up plays and that's what hockey is all about.

When I thought about what he said later on, I realized that he was right. I realized last year I was focused on scoring and keeping the puck to myself but that this year I had given a lot of effort to passing and working as a team player.

In that moment, I knew why I hadn't earned a trophy but more than that, I realized that there is no "I" in team.

I'm so grateful that I learned that life lesson.