

Most Valued Per



Why did Jill say she wanted to be like me when she seemed to make it a point to be unkind to me?

Jill' stumbled around our shared room in the motel where we were staying with the rest of our high school basketball team, ranting about why she'd do something so stupid as to drink beer. She fell across me, pinning me to my bed. I tried to push her off, but she was about a foot taller than I was.

Then, with her nose way too close to mine, she asked a question I'll never forget: "Deb, why can't I just be like you?"

Like me? What? Jill had complete athletic control of her six-foot four-inch frame. She got good grades in tough classes, and the previous week she'd accepted a full ride scholarship to play ball at an elite university. So why did she want to be like me?

I was confused, especially given her treatment of me during the past few months. We

both played volleyball too, and our volleyball team elected me captain. Jill made it clear she didn't think I was fit for the honor. Slyly, quietly, Jill used hurtful comments to isolate me from the team. She claimed I was jealous of her and made fun of my missed plays and personal habits. A promising season fell to an early loss in the state volleyball tournament, resulting in a huge squabble among our players. Tempers flared, and fingers were pointed.

In an effort to patch things up, our basketball coach assigned us to share the same motel room. Now here lay the drunken MVP of the tournament. After I finally moved her to her bed, I listened to her snore and worked on the puzzle in my mind.

What did I have that she could want? I began to list my blessings. I had parents

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who supported me and a future that didn't rely on making every shot I took. I knew who I was—a daughter of a Heavenly Father who loves me. I knew the Savior and the power of His Atonement. Tears welled in my eyes as the Spirit bore witness of the truth of the gospel and the power of living it.

That experience started my quest to understand those who are unkind and to see them through the Savior's eyes. From that moment, our basketball season moved forward and ended successfully. We didn't take state, but we made it to the semifinal game as a close-knit team, not as finger-pointing individuals. My greatest hope is that Jill saw the Savior's image in my countenance for the remainder of our senior year. **NE**

* Name has been changed.

