

# Traits of a survivor— chris mccandless

Business



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Chris Johnson McCandless was a rebel, a pioneer, and he showed us things we had never considered as a public, and yet, there are a lot of people that don't understand him. Chris showed us that perhaps America isn't everything that people crack it up to be, he showed us how messed up our vision was and how we were so distant from the one thing keeping us alive. Krakauer wrote into the wild to help people better understand Chris' life and the reasoning behind what he did, and also, I think, to come to terms with his own life. In my opinion two questions that best help us understand Chris and the lessons he taught us and taught himself are, what does it mean to be a rebel? And also what is the relationship between nature and American identity? Rebellion is often sought after during the fleeting years of youth, though it is a pursuit many follow to some extent or another.

Rebellion, in all of its forms comes with a price, and McCandless, young and alone, paid that price in blood, on the verge of death he notes a passage from "Wise Men in Their Bad Hours" which greatly helps us understand his feelings and his admiration for nature, and overall I think what he was encountering before death, and what he was coming to realize. "Death's a fierce meadowlark: but to die having made something more equal to the centuries than muscle and bone, is mostly to shed weakness. The mountains are dead stone, the people admire or hate their stature, their insolent quietness, the mountains are not softened or troubled and a few dead man's thoughts have the same temper." (Krakauer 199) In all of the travels that McCandless took on his journey up until and into him entering the bush, he led life as a rebel, he wanted to live life to its fullest, to the most extreme that he could. He didn't care if it killed him because his rebellion, his going

against what everyone wanted for him was more meaningful than anything else to him.

What he wanted more than anything was to simply be free. “ I wanted movement and not a calm course of existence. I wanted excitement and danger and the chance to sacrifice myself for my love. I felt in myself a superabundance of energy which found no outlet in our quiet life.” (Tolstoy ‘ Family happiness’) The purest form of rebellion is that in which one finds themselves giving everything they have and achieving the true goal, the goal above everything else, and that it was McCandless did throughout his travels, that was the success that he achieved by rebelling and leaving everything behind. He didn't rebel to be some ‘ hippie free loader’ just trying to get by on nothing he rebelled for himself, he wanted to have that moment of joy that is what life is all about, and that is what he achieved.

Americans today, in ‘ Modern Western Living’ are more disconnected from living and more disconnected from nature than ever before. In the hustle and bustle of todays world, of todays living it is often very easy to fall into the trap that corporate America wants you to be in. The work a day lives of 9-5 getting home making dinner working from home, sleeping and getting up early the next day to do it all over again. At this time, now more than ever, we as a whole nation united are moving farther and farther away the community and love and support that being in nature provides. Chris McCandless saw this a long time before any others saw it coming, he saw the shift that the convenience of westernized living was doing to us, and he got out.

He got out of the cycle of and into nature. This is best expressed in a quote from John Krakauer “ Gillian wondered whether he’d picked up one of those crackpots from the lower forty-eight who come north to live out ill-considered Jack London fantasies. Alaska has long been a magnet for dreamers and misfits; people who think the unsullied enormity of the Last Frontier will patch all the holes in their lives. The bush is an unforgiving place, however, that cares nothing for hope or longing.” (Krakauer 6) Is America really so contorted that someone who wants to live life outside in nature, who wants to live in a way that doesn’t harm others and makes everyone happier and healthier is considered to be a ‘ crackpot’? Have we really let our selves come to the point where it is considered idiotic and stupid to make yourself happy? As you have seen, America is in a lousy state, we are disconnected from nature and it takes someone dying a tragic death for the possibility that nature is important to even be considered. Chris McCandless was a rebel, but he shouldn’t have been.

These two essential questions of what does it mean to be a rebel? And also what is the relationship between nature and American identity? Not only help us to understand Chris McCandless’ life and reasoning but also, perhaps our own. These Essential Questions along with McCandless’ journey not only show us who he was but also how far America has come from being a nation connected with the earth, a nation that cares of one another and cares for this giant blue and green sphere we call our home. What, then, should we care about if we can’t even show care for the one thing keeping us alive?