

The modern world:
carvers' what we talk
about when we talk
about love and
alexie'...



The contemporary world in which we live in has drastically changed over time. Today, to survive you must believe in yourself. What I mean by believing in yourself is understand your strengths and weaknesses, fight for what you love, be vocal when appropriate, and don't ever let life stop you because your confused. While reading Alexie's' Indian Education and Carvers' What We Talk About When We Talk About Love I learned a lot about everyday life struggles. These stories reflect today's modern life and just how much of an impact you have on yourself.

In my opinion, todays state of the contemporary world and survival is all based on yourself and how far you can go. To survive you cannot let another person judge you or determine what you can and cannot do. In Alexie's' Indian Education, the author explains the unfair and terrible education system that was set up for the Indians. They were unable to be who they wanted to be due the automatic group they were separated in which suggest they would not succeed. In the second grade, the narrator talks about the setbacks the teachers were trying to cause because he was a different religion. " She sent a letter home with me that told my parents to either cut my braids or keep me home." (Alexie p89) Throughout his school years he was constantly bullied but he knew he was different and did not allow anyone to take that from him. In the twelfth grade " I walk down the aisle, valedictorian of this farm town high school." (Alexie p93) Despite everything he was facing, he did not allow anyone to determine his future.

Many people face traumatic experiences because they aren't looked upon as what society thinks is " normal". But to survive in today's world you must beat all odds and show and prove for your religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or

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whatever category you stand for. Another important characteristic you need is openness. You must be open to new things, to communication, to learn, to understand, to love. Which brings me to Carver's story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. In this story, there are two couples who each have a different idea of what love is. One woman whose name is Terri had a very traumatic love experience in her first marriage. She was constantly abused physically and mentally. She believed because her ex-husband committed suicide for her and always told her " I love you" that it was real love. " He was willing to die for it. He did die for it." (Carver) Her current husband Mel did not believe it was real love. He explains how you can love multiple people and then sometime later hate them, so he questions if it was really love. Just as Alexie supports in his statement " But I was saying goodbye to my tribe, to all the Indian girls and women I might have loved." (p91) Meanwhile the second couple had been together for a short period of time so Mel explained they were in the " honeymoon" (Carver) phase of their marriage. This story reflects the contemporary world we live in today because love is controversial. There aren't any two people who share the same kind of love. To love, you must be open and willing. Also, never let anyone tell you that what you feel is real is fake. Only you can determine and get through each day with a special someone because of what you feel!

During my research, I came across article named *Survival Skills for the 21st Century* by Jason Bedford. In this article, he explains and explores four survival skills everyone needs in order to succeed. They were patience, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Bedford's article reflects the two stories I spoke about above because in each story the characters

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showed signs of these skills. In Indian Education, Alexie was faced with so much bullying and stereotyping but he kept his patience because he knew he was no different than anyone else. In Carver's What We Talk About When We Talk About Love, critical thinking plays a huge underlying effect in their decisions of what love is. " In today's multifaceted world, sometimes it appears as if there is no one right answer for any question." (Bedford) There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to love, and knowing yourself.

To conclude, to survive in today's contemporary world it isn't about your wealth, materialistic things, or even hunting and gathering like thousands of years ago. To survive today, you must understand yourself and your surroundings. Alexie and Carver's stories reflect some characteristics needed to succeed.