

Touching spirit bear



In the novel *Touching Spirit Bear* by Ben Mikaelson the author discusses the idea of lessons. There are positive and negative lessons to be learned from the novel however the main focus is on the positive lessons. The most positive lessons are responsibility, trust and discovering yourself. In the novel one of the positive lessons I focused on was responsibility. When Cole returns home from his first time on the island after being mauled, Cole's mother starts to take responsibility for most of Cole's anger problems.

Cole was neglected and treated as though he was unloved by his parents for most of his life. All of Cole's life he was beat and unloved, his mother was drunk all the time and his father was violent, and he would beat Cole. Cole's mother never stood up for Cole because she was fearful that Cole's father would beat her. Once Cole returns to the island his first lesson is responsibility. He has to start by re-building the shelter that he will spend his one year banishment in. He incinerated the first one that was built for him by Edwin.

Cole got really frustrated the first time he was on the island because he thought that it was his father's entire fault that he was there and he never took any responsibility for what he did to Peter. As a result of Cole's extreme anger and frustration he burnt down the shelter with all his food and supplies for the whole year and tried to escape by swimming. Once Cole came to the island he was expected to build his own shelter. Edwin was hurt by the actions of Cole when Cole burnt down the first shelter because Edwin was the one that built it. This time it was up to Cole to take on the responsibility and build a shelter for himself.

When Cole returned to the island a second time he starts to come back to reality and slowly start taking responsibility for the harm he caused Peter. When Cole lived in Minneapolis he beat Peter nearly to death. Peter is now mentally and physically scarred. Cole smashed Peter's head into the sidewalk while he was beating Peter. Now Peter has slurred speech that he will have for the rest of his life. Cole starts to realize that his anger problems might have been caused by his horrendous childhood but it was his choice to beat Peter nearly to death.

Cole returning to the island a second time impacted him in a positive way, he started over, taking responsibility for what he did wrong and started to show everyone that he is slowly changing. Cole starts to let go of the past and all of his horrid nightmares and tries to learn how to trust the people around him. Cole starts to trust himself, trust his decisions and believe in himself. Since Cole has been sentenced to one year banishment on this island his self confidence went drastically down. He shut himself down and ignored everyone who cared about him and wanted to help him out of his stressful situation.

Cole has started to gain trust in himself because of the island, Edwin and Garvey, and the Spirit Bear. Cole begins to trust his mother after she went to court and charged Cole's father with abuse. Cole's mother stopped drinking and started to regain her relationship with her son and starting showing Cole how much she actually loved him. All of Cole's life he felt as if his parents did not love him and did not care about him. Cole's father's anger problems caused him to be violent and beat Cole, hard. Cole's mother just tried to ignore what was going on by drinking.

She was just as scared as Cole was if not more. Cole's mother was mostly drunk out of her mind, she drank away her fear and depression until she realized how hurt Cole actually was. After Cole got mauled by the Spirit Bear his mother went to court and charged Cole's father with abuse and as a result Cole let his mother back in and started to trust her again. Cole finally started to trust Edwin and Garvey because they were the only people really putting in an effort to help Cole. At the beginning they were the only ones that cared about Cole.

The first time Cole was sent to the island he wanted absolutely nothing to do with Garvey or Edwin. All he wanted was to escape from the island. Cole thought that they did not actually want to help him. Cole thought they were just paid to. Once Cole got mauled by the Spirit Bear he had forty-eight hours to think about everything, most importantly Edwin and Garvey. Once Edwin came to Cole's rescue he knew right then and there that Edwin and Garvey actually cared. If they did not care they would have left Cole out there to die.

Edwin and Garvey are the reason why Cole got sent to the island for a second time instead of jail on a few conditions of course. Cole started to create a strong bond with Edwin and Garvey. Cole would go for a soak in the lake with Edwin and push the ancestor rock every morning. Cole has slowly developed a strong bond with Garvey. Cole starts to let his guard down, he starts to learn how to trust the people that really love and care for him. Cole starts to learn the lesson of discovering who he really is and what his life means to him.

After Cole got mauled by the Spirit Bear he felt as though he was dying which made him quickly realize how important life is. Before and during the mauling all Cole wanted was to be dead. As soon as he got looked after, he wanted to embrace life as much as he possibly could. He discovered that he really did want to live. Not in a jail cell or on that island but he wanted to discover what life really had in store for him. When Cole returns to the island, he starts to fill the emptiness of not knowing his purpose and the discovering of himself.

Once Cole starts to build the shelter it makes him discover one of the millions of stumps he's going to come across because of his wrong doing. The more animals Cole sees the more dances he does and the more inspiration he gets for the creation of his totem pole. When Cole goes for a swim in the lake every morning before sunrise it makes him find a place in his mind where there is no pain mentally or physically, no hurt, no painful memories. Just a place to relax and find peace with himself internally and externally. Cole starts to discover how much easier life is without his anger problems.

When Cole got mauled by the Spirit Bear he started to realize how much pain and suffering Peter went through when he beat him up. Once Cole was all alone laying there in the dark silence, he slowly started to think about Peter and wondered if Peter had felt the exact same mental and physical pain he was going through. Cole finally snapped out of his negative ways and attitude and started to realize what Peter was going through... he got attacked by a monster. Cole starts wanting to live because he wants to show

and prove to Peter how truly sorry he is for beating on him, and that he experienced the exact same pain and fear.

After Peter goes into a huge stage of depression Cole requests Peter come to the island and discover himself just like Cole did. Once Peter arrived at the island he wanted nothing to do with Cole until Cole started to really put in effort to making Peter find himself and his inner totem. Cole while on the island starts to discover a lot of things. Like who he is, what his purpose is in life, and how much Cole has actually changed from a troubled boy to a mature, responsible and trustworthy man. The three most positive lessons in the novel are responsibility, trust and discovering yourself.