

# The shawshank redemption

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In the film, *The Shawshank Redemption*, multiple themes are evident but ultimately the theme of hope is the most highlighted throughout the movie. The main character, Andy Dufresne, a 30 year old former vice president of a bank was convicted of the murder of his wife Linda and her lover Glenn Quentin. Upon his arrival at Shawshank, the inmates had targeted Andy as the weakest link among the new group of prisoners, yet little did they know that Andy's hope and determination would lead to many advantages for them.

The Power of Hope Hope, more than anything else, drives the inmates at Shawshank and gives them the will to live. Andy's sheer determination to maintain his own sense of self-worth and escape keeps him from dying of frustration and anger in solitary confinement. Hope is an abstract, passive emotion, akin to the passive, immobile, and inert lives of the prisoners. Andy sets about making hope a reality in the form of the agonizing progress he makes each year tunneling his way through his concrete cell wall.

Even Andy's even-keeled and well-balanced temperament, however, eventually succumb to the bleakness of prison life. Red notes that Tommy Williams's revelation that he could prove Andy's innocence was like a key unlocking a cage in Andy's mind, a cage that released a tiger called Hope. This hope reinvigorates Andy and spreads to many of the other inmates in the prison.

In his letter addressed to Red, Andy writes that "hope is a good thing," which in the end is all that Red has left. Red's decision to go to Mexico to find Andy is the ultimate proof of Red's own redemption, not from his life as a criminal but from his compromised state, bereft of hope and with no

reason to embrace life or the future. Red's closing words, as he embarks tentatively onto a new path, show that hope is a difficult concept to sustain both inside the prison and out.