

I know why the caged bird sings reaction paper

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

My Reaction to I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings Maya Angelou once proclaimed in an interview, “ All my work is meant to say, ‘ You may encounter many defeats but you must not be defeated’” (Anthology). This statement holds especially true in her autobiography I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings. Her inspirational coming of age story is filled with many defeats that shaped her into the independent and compassionate woman she became. After reading this book, I found there to be many meaningful areas that opened up my eyes and made me think again about my own personal and professional development.

In addition, it allowed me to inquire more questions and wanted me to learn more about Maya Angelou's path to greatness. There were many significant parts in Angelou's autobiography that dealt with the issues of racism, sexism, violence, and loneliness. In my opinion, the parts that dealt with these various issues were most meaningful because they are controversial issues that Angelou was courageous enough to write about. From the start of the book, Angelou expresses her racist views when she is in church and fantasizes that one day she will wake up out of her “ black ugly dream. This part of the book foreshadows the rest of the racist events that will occur throughout the novel. For instance, the time when Angelou goes to the dentist with her Momma, the dentist says he would rather stick his hand in the mouth of a dog than in her mouth. Later in the book, Angelou discusses how she is raped by her mother's boyfriend. She does not speak for five years because of this sexual assault. Later on, when her silence is broken, Angelou is involved with a violent attack. This time it is her father's girlfriend who stabs her with scissors out of pure jealousy.

Throughout the book Angelou feels alone because she has insecurities about the way that she looks and the color of her skin. Her loneliness is drawn out more after she is raped because she puts the blame on herself. All these monumental parts of the book are most meaningful because it shows Angelou's endurance and how her life is not frayed by the unfortunate events that took place in her life. Throughout her childhood, Angelou experienced things that she should have never had to experience. It is admirable to think that with so many negatives in one's life Angelou was able to become such a successful person.

Reading about Angelou's experiences led me to think about my development as a person. Maya Angelou turned out to be successful even through her harsh childhood. I then question myself about what is stopping myself from developing in such way with a normal childhood. Upon finishing *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, I took away many reasons why this book will help my personal and professional development. I never experienced a traumatic childhood quite the way Angelou did. Therefore, I should be more thankful for the loving family I have, the non-prejudice community I live in, my safety, and my college education.

If Angelou was as victorious as she was all while enduring major hardships, then there is no excuse for me not to be. This book has also taught me, even though I may not see it, that people do go through hardships. For example, when Angelou took a vow of silence after her rape, no one understood why she was doing it. There is always a reason for why a person acts in the way that they do. As a professional, I will do my best not to judge anyone on the

outside because I have no idea what goes on in their personal life. As a future occupational therapist, I will try to have my clients open up to me.

Therefore, I can find out what is going on in their personal life and not judge them, but help them instead. I may have an impact on a clients life just by giving them an equal opportunity. There are many questions I raised and areas that I would like to learn more about upon finishing the autobiography of Maya Angelou. The novel ends in a positive picture of Maya with her newborn son. I question how much did Angelou's life change with her newborn son and how she was able to accomplish so many things while taking care of her child?

She, after all, was involved with the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and published many famous works of literature. Was it hard for her as an African American woman to achieve so much while facing racism and sexism? Lastly, how does her story end? Does Angelou end up with a loving husband whom she could've celebrated all her achievements with? My response to this novel is a positive one. The most meaningful part of this book is the way that Angelou was able to find herself while enduring major conflicts such as racism, sexism, violence, and loneliness. In her own words she did encounter many defeats, but that did not stop her from being the best that she could be. For that reason Maya Angelou is an inspiration and a role model. From reading this book I know now that I am capable of developing myself more personally and professionally. I have not encountered many defeats in my life but if I were I know that I can brave the storm and not be defeated, just like Angelou was not. References Angelou, M. (1997). *I know why the caged bird sings*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books. Douglass, F. (2004). *The Norton*

anthology of african american literature. (2 ed.). New York New York: W. W. Norton and company.