

# Wendy's relationships in the usual rules essay



Wendy is faced with many questions following her mother's death.

She is faced with self-actualization and becoming independent as well as self-sufficient without the aid of a strong maternal or paternal figure.

Following the aftermath of 9/11, instead of responding to the events in an emotionally selfish way, Wendy attempts to fill the void left by her mother by nurturing and caring for Lie in Josh's absence. The largest factor in Wendy's change in behavior is the effect of the legislations she makes whilst living in California. When Wendy goes to California, she tries to begin a new life by taking advantage of her clean slate, and thus lies to the people she meets because she would rather them not feel pity for her. She would rather the world to get to know her for who she is as a person and not for the events that have transpired within the last month. She explores her new found independence by choosing to take the initiative of going into town and spending her days there as opposed to spending it in school like the typical teenage girl would be expected to.

Wendy receives life lessons and makes real world interactions with the people around her in the time she spends on the streets. The independent thoughts she makes and actions she takes, while purely experimental, and having no regard for her future, shape her behavior and transform her into an adult. When Wendy meets Alan, she sees a strong, unbreakable paternal figure. While Alan could have easily crumbled after his wife had left him he instead chose to take the active impact it had made on him and his son, and make it positive by becoming closer and even more involved with his son. This shows Wendy what it means to be a father, and shows her the values in fatherhood. It is apparent that this experience makes her realize that while

Josh is not her biological father, he certainly exhibits many of the important core values of a father. Alan sheds some of his deeply rooted paternal instincts on Wendy when he chooses to enrich her mind in the only way he knows how; through books he is able to take a proverbial key and unlock Wendy's mind to information that is invaluable in the next few months when she is tasked with making decisions upon where and how she will spend the rest of her teenage life.

Another unlikely influence in Wendy's life is Carolyn; Wendy father's girlfriend. Carolyn shows Wendy how to be resilient and stand tall in the wake of misfortune. From the visit of her son that went array to the collapse of the cacti business she had worked so hard for, Carolyn chalks these events up to experience and moves on.

While Wendy by no means sulks following her others death, Carolyn is there to reason with Wendy and help her come to terms with what has happened. Carolyn, as a maternal figure shows Wendy how to be an unwavering, strong woman. Carolyn's independence and freedom inspire her in more ways than one. While it can easily be overlooked, it is also important to note that Carolyn is the character that persuades Garrett to let Wendy enrich herself beyond the confines of a traditional school setting. It becomes readily apparent that Violet is a foil character for Janet, Wendy mother.

While Janet and Violet both become pregnant from a young age, that is where the similarities come to an end. While Violet is utterly confused as to raising a child, and at times folds under pressure and resorts to physical abuse when dealing with her son, Janet took the gift she was given and

chose to pave the way for a happy life for Wendy. Janet nurtured Wendy's needs, but strictly regulated her wants in life. As she would be quoted several times saying, " treats make trouble," her parenting style was a detrimental stepping stone in cognitive development of Wendy. While Violet is not a role model for Wendy, taking a glimpse of her life and taking a walk in her shoes solidifies the lessons her mother instilled from a very young age. Wendy's relationships throughout the book *The Usual Rules* serve as a foundation for her independence without these figures in her life, Wendy could have easily been taken under by the wrath of depression following her mother's passing, but instead the people in her life build her into something stronger than she ever was; an independent young adult with high hopes and the makings for a prosperous future.