

Breakfast club



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I have seen the breakfast club three times before taking this class and then saw it for a fourth time during class and I must say that it is defiantly one of my favourite movies.

Before this class, I loved it because it was a fun movie depicting teenage school life in its simplest form and it was more or less something I could relate to. I noticed only the funny quotes; close calls and random scenes that made me say “ Ha! It’s funny because it’s true. ” Such as the scene where all the characters are in detention and they are all just making the dumbest faces, sounds and actions with their pencils. But after taking this class and doing a bit of theory on groups and communication, I realized that the film had a bit more depth to it. It was a perfect example of how humans interact and communicate in groups.

In this paper I will discuss how Schutz’s 3-stage theory, cohesion and groupthink applies to the breakfast club itself. Will Schutz believed that there were three dimensions to group development. Those three dimensions are inclusion, control and affection (intimacy). Inclusion refers to when we are put in a group and we wonder whether we actually want to be in that group or not, whether or not the group members will accept us as a part of that group, if we will be appreciated in this group, will we commit strongly to the group and when I am away from the group, can I do well on my own? The control stage is the desire for power within the group.

We seek control because we want to be winners. If we are controlled then we comply and we are willing to take orders from others. Problems with control include power struggles in decision making, leadership and sharing

responsibility. Affection includes communication, openness to express feelings and the group high that brings productivity. In the film, we can see that the inclusion of the members of the group is quite unwanted in the beginning.

All the characters come from different groups and some want nothing to do with one another. The brain or nerd (Brian Johnson) is the only one who wants to be accepted by all the members in the group. The jock (Andrew Clark) usually picks on nerds such as Brian and would become an outcast in his group of athletes if he were ever caught dead socializing with him. The princess (Claire Standish) is part of a high social class and would never be caught dead with anyone outside her wealthy click (except perhaps Andrew since he is a jock and we all know the princess is usually dating the jock). The troublemaker (John Bender) preys on all the members of the group, exploiting their weaknesses for his personal enjoyment (Ironically, without this, the group would have probably never even spoken a word to one another and his intense negativity towards the group is what brought them all together). And finally the basket case “Allison Reynolds” is somewhat indifferent about the group at first and pays no attention to them and then watches them from behind, as the group grows closer.

She likely has no group of her own and likes the fact that she doesn't need to depend on anyone but she clearly craves attention and this is shown by her lies made up to impress or shock the group members. As for control, there seems to be a power struggle between John and Andrew. John is the tough guy and tries to push all the members or the group down to make himself feel like he is better than them all, but Andrew, being the jock that he is, is

not going to let another male get the best of him. Claire refuses to be controlled or ordered by such low class scum like John and tries to just ignore him but he is very persistent and hits a few touchy areas (such as asking her whether or not she has had sex before) to get her attention. Brian is the one who doesn't mind taking orders from the group and would just love to be accepted by them all which is why he usually opens his mouth to comment on or agree with whatever is being said, but sadly he usually shut down only to be embarrassed by another one of John's inappropriate comments.

This makes him the most affectionate. He is very open to expressing his feelings and doesn't even hesitate before opening himself to the group. Claire and Andrew are less open since they aren't used to being intimate with their group. They usually just go with what everyone else is doing and John even picks on Andrew for the fact that all he knows how to do is take orders and he is unable to think for himself. Alison is not very affectionate because she is ignored by her family and probably has had many negative experiences when trying to express herself to them so she either stays quiet or makes up outrageous stories to get shock the people around her and possible get them to hate her or think she is a freak. John only opens himself up when he is trying to prove to the group that his life is the hardest of them all such as when he describes how he yelled at and beaten by his father.

Cohesion is basically the unity of the group and how well it sticks together and supports its members. In the beginning, the breakfast club was fighting against cohesion. All the members (except Brian) wanted nothing to do with one another since none of them had anything in common. But they were forced to be stay in the group since they were in detention and had no

choice but to be together. The group had a common enemy, the principal (Richard Vernon) who was always out to get the students and treated them all like trash with his putdowns.

The group slowly but surely came closer together and defended one another against this enemy. Like when John was supposed to be locked in a separate room by himself and he snuck back into the room with the rest of the group to retrieve his marijuana he was almost caught by Richard but he hid beneath Claire and even though he tried to push his face under her skirt she still did not reveal his whereabouts. He also hit his head on the desk when Claire resisted his attempt and Andrew was quick to cover it up by making the same sound with his hand on the desk even though he was not fond of John. This was probably because as much as they did not like John, they disliked Richard more and would feel guilty by betraying their group member and throwing him to the lions.

By the end, the group had a very high cohesion and they all became good friends. But whether or not this friendship was true was unclear. Claire openly admitted that she would not talk to any of the group members in front of her popular friends out of risk of blemishing her own popularity, but at the end of the movie, she is kissing John and gives him her earring. This is either because they are dating from that moment on or she is showing her love to him but knows she cannot be seen with him so she gives him her earring as a symbol of this forbidden love.

Groupthink is the forced manufacture of consent and conformity to group values and ethics and is unfortunately quite common and easy to fall into. It

is the main weakness of Claire and Andrew. Claire is the popular girl in school and only hangs out with the coolest and the richest of people and wouldn't be caught dead with anyone else. In this type of group, she does, wears and says everything just like the rest of her popular group members out of fear of becoming an unpopular outcast.

Andrew has this weakness for different reasons. Not out of fear of being unpopular or an outcast but because he was conditioned by his father from a young age to be a winner, to be the best and to do what he is told in order to do so. He is afraid that if he does what he wants rather than what his father wants, his father will reject him and he will be a loser, but it is at the end of the movie that he realizes that his life is his own and what his father thinks is of little importance. I haven't learned much from doing this exercise, but I learned a lot from the movie itself and the material from class. The movie showed me that even if all groups are different, each individual is the same. We may think that the prom queen is the happiest person or the jock has it all or the nerd is content with his outstanding scholastic achievements, but deep down the prom queen wants to be herself and the jock wants to be his own person and the nerd just wants to be liked.

The material covered in class showed me how there is much more to human interaction and communication than saying hello and deciding whether you like a person or group or not. There are group behaviours, messages, perception and relationships and realizing this has helped me to pinpoint my own communication strengths and weaknesses.