

Analysis of the film forrest gump by robert zemeckis

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



Watching Forrest Gump for the first time I feel that the movie has a little of everything in it, from action and war to love and romance. For one man to overcome so many hardships and live a life full of love and happiness it is inspiring. Each character had something that reached viewers. From Jenny to Lieutenant Dan they all had something that made them easy to connect with. Even the people that sat on the bench next to Forrest created interest; they listened and were in the story for us, but were not truly part of it.

Forrest Gump could be referred to as stupid, but I believe that the way he tries to understand the world around him and make the best of everything is rather clever. When the film begins we start from Forrest's childhood. We learn about the high expectations that his mother had for him. We see that he is lonely, and we see his growing love for Jenny. For a boy that is bullied so much and has so many obstacles in his life he loves deeply. Due to his mental disabilities, Forrest became the victim of academic discrimination, but as she will always be his mother fights for him to have the same opportunities as the other children.

She completely believes in Forrest and wants him to be the best that he can be. During this stage of his life I thought of Erikson's industry vs. inferiority concept. During that time children are supposed to work toward mastering knowledge and intellectual skills. (Santrock, 2011 p23) The negative possibility of not mastering those skills would be that children would feel incompetent and unproductive. As Forrest Gump grows he still maintains his mental disability, but his athletic abilities have started to make a difference in his life.

He runs so fast that he gets asked to play football for the University of Alabama. Though he grows older he still has the innocence of a child. During his adolescence where most other people are experimenting with sex he seems almost upset by the idea. He loves Jenny yet when she tries for sexual contact with him he looks hurt and confused by it. This stage in his life he would be going through Erikson's identity vs. identity confusion. (Santrock, 2011 p 23) During this time individuals are trying to figure out who they are and what they are going to do in life. If the adolescent explores in a healthy way then they will form a positive identity; however, if they struggle and have a difficult time then it may result in continued identity confusion. Forrest was an active part of many important events including protests against desegregation, the Vietnam War, anti-war activism, Black Panther Party meetings, and the Ping Pong diplomacy period. Those important events should have made a difference to him, but he went through it all as if it didn't really affect him.

During the whole movie he seemed completely oblivious to the significance of everything that was going on around him and the part he played in those events. Forrest's generally happy go lucky demeanor and unobservant nature contrasted harshly with Jenny. Jenny Curran as a child was Forrest Gump's best friend and possibly his only friend. Jenny has a much harsher life at home than Forrest has. While Forrest has a loving mother that raises him Jenny has an abusive dad. Jenny spent a lot of time with Forrest as a child because she didn't want to be alone.

Jenny and Forrest were like “ peas and carrots”. When they were young Jenny taught Forrest how to read, and Forrest shared his mellow, carefree attitude with her. When Jenny is young after Forrest comes over to her house and sees the way her father treats her they run into the fields trying to get as far away from her home as possible. Jenny falls down to the ground and prays to God to make her a bird so she can fly far away. There are many developmental consequences of abuse on children. Santrock, 2011 p 258) Some of the consequences of abuse and maltreatment in childhood and adolescence are poor emotional regulation, attachment problems, problems in peer relations, difficulty adapting to school and other psychological problems such as depression and delinquency. The abuse that Jenny sustained in her childhood caused problems throughout her life. As a young adult Jenny went to an all girls’ college while Forrest played football at the University of Alabama. This was the beginning of Forrest’s success and Jenny’s bad decisions.

Jenny started messing around with boys and getting in trouble. Forrest rescued her from being with a guy, but Jenny could not let herself be close to Forrest even though he cared for her deeply. Her bad behavior caused her to be kicked out of school. Jenny decided that she wanted to become a famous singer, but somewhere along the way she ended up singing naked in a strip club. Again Forrest rescued her and again she was ungrateful and ended up leaving behind the one person in her life that cared about her most. The next time Jenny is seen she had been spending time with hippies at anti-war protests.

Forrest tries to get Jenny out of another abusive relationship, but she doesn't want to be saved and leaves Forrest again. When Jenny went through Erikson's identity vs. identity confusion (Santrock, 2011 p 23) stage her past abuse caused her to make the wrong choices and left her in continued identity confusion. Each time we see Jenny in the movie she is into drugs and running with the wrong crowd. During the adult years, people who were abused as children often have a difficulty maintaining healthy adult relationships.

According to Miller-Perrin, Perrin, Kocur (Santrock, 2011 p 258) those adults are at a higher risk for violent behavior toward other adults-especially dating partners and marital partners- as well as substance abuse , anxiety and depression. During New Year's Eve 1972 Jenny contemplates suicide, at that point she has reached her very lowest and we see her change her mind and leave hopefully to change for the better. The rest of the movie is a rollercoaster of emotion for Jenny and Forrest. Forrest wants nothing more than to be with the only woman other than his mother that he has loved his entire life.

When Jenny and Forrest are finally together Forrest thought they were going to be together forever, and Jenny ran away again. Her past abuse leaves her afraid of both trusting Forrest to love her and allowing herself to feel worthy of being loved. By the end of the movie, Jenny has finally found herself. After Forrest spent his time after her leaving running for 3 years, 2 months, 14 days, and 16 hours she finally wants to see him. From their night together she had gotten pregnant and had a son that she named Forrest.

Perhaps it was having a child that helped settle Jenny into adulthood or maybe she had just finally come to terms with the lasting effects of abuse, but she decided to marry Forrest and live with him for her remaining time alive. In that time that she is a wife and mother she looks more at peace than ever. It took Jenny her whole life to come to terms with the abuse she endured as a child and the abuse she subjected herself to as an adult. She experienced an abusive father, played out jobs, abusive boyfriends and grabby customers, drugs and thoughts of suicide before she could let herself be loved by Forrest.

During Forrest Gump's time in the military he meets Lt. Dan Taylor. Though Lt. Dan is more of a peripheral character, his struggles fit well with the movie. Lieutenant Dan Taylor was born into a family with the proud military tradition that someone in his family had died in every American war. He was sent to Vietnam during the Vietnam War and assigned to the fourth platoon where he met Bubba and Forrest. While serving in Vietnam it was evident that he was paranoid of snipers and surprise attacks in general. When his platoon encountered an ambush he called for a Napalm drop.

During the ambush he was hit in the legs, and was certain that his time had come to fulfill the family legacy of dying in that war. However, Forrest Gump in his search for his fallen best friend Bubba comes across Lt. Dan and carries him and many other men to safety. Lt. Dan is sent to a field hospital and his legs are amputated. Forrest Gump is brought to the same hospital and Lt. Dan confronts Forrest about saving him. He is very upset that he

didn't get to die like other men in the family and feels that his destiny has been ruined. At this time Lt.

Dan is coming to terms with his possible selves (Santrock, 2011 p 602). As he is recovering from his double amputation he has to consider the life that he had, the death he thought he was going to have, and the life he is left as an amputee. Lt. Dan is eventually discharged due to his handicap and he ends up in New York City. He spends his time after being discharged living in New York, possibly off the government or programs for injured veterans. He lives in a trashy motel room and drinks far too much. He looks like he has been living a hard life since his time in the military.

On New Year's Eve he meets up with Forrest again and even though he still has not come to terms with Forrest saving his life, he treats Forrest like a friend. He defends Forrest from the women he had over and promises Forrest to be his first mate if he ever becomes the captain of a shrimping boat. When Forrest actually buys a shrimping boat Lt. Dan does become the first mate. Lt. Dan guides Forrest to where he believes there will be shrimp which leads to many failures. While out fishing Lt. Dan and Forrest endure Hurricane Carmen. Lt.

Dan is at the highest point that the boat has to offer yelling and challenging God. At this point Lt. Dan seems to come to terms with the life he has ben dealt. Lt. Dan looks more positively on life after this point and even thanks Forrest for saving his life. The hurricane destroyed the entire fleet of shrimping boats in Bayou La Batre, except for the Jenny. As a result, Forrest Gump's shrimping business takes off. Lt. Dan invests the already high profits

of the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company into a new computer company, Apple Computers, making both Forrest Gump and himself very wealthy.

With his new found wealth Lt. Dan Taylor is able to afford custom made prosthetic legs which give him the ability to walk again. Lt. Dan also faces Erikson's identity vs. identity confusion (Santrock, 2011 p 23) during his life several times. When he has to come to terms with who he thought he was going to be he struggles with his identity then again when he has to live as an amputee and once more when he gets new legs. After all he had to go through in his adulthood he finally meets and marries Susan, his Korean wife. Another peripheral character is Pvt. Benjamin Buford 'Bubba' Blue.

When Forrest first gets on the bus for the military he faces the same problems as an adult that he did as a child, nobody wanted to sit with him. Walking between the rows of seats looking for a friendly face he found Bubba. Bubba appeared to have many of the same problems that Forrest did. Bubba possibly faced issues with his ethnic identity (Santrock, 2011 p 385) as he was given the name Bubba just like one of those redneck boys. While serving in the U. S. Army Bubba and Forrest become close friends. Bubba knows everything there is to know about shrimp, Forrest and Bubba make a deal to start their own shrimp business one day.

However, Bubba never makes it back to America alive. After some time, Forrest finally goes to Bayou La Batre, where Bubba's family lives. Forrest buys a shrimp boat to start the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company. The Bubba Gump Shrimp Company later earned a spot in Fortune magazine, and Forrest sent a check with Bubba's earnings to Bubba's mother. This film dealt a lot

with death and accepting death as a part of life. Robert Kastenbaum's death system comes in to play several times during this movie. Forrest has to go through the death of several people he cares about.

First he endured Bubba's death whom he had planned a future and had become close friends. Then he survived the death of his mother. She was the only person in his entire life that he could always count on. Just before her death Forrest's mother tells him one last time how proud of him she is and reminds him the " life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get", she says that it was her destiny to raise Forrest. She was always there for him, and rooting for him, and telling him that he could be whatever he wanted to be.

Her death was a tough thing to work through and for a time he completely left the boat and company to Lt. Dan and stayed at his mother's home, taking care of things and grieving. Then eventually he had to endure the death of Jenny. He had loved Jenny his whole life then it seemed almost as soon as they were finally together she had died. Forrest's emotions for Jenny come out at her grave, and while there he leaves her a letter written by Forrest Jr. As the film closes Forrest Jr is at the bus stop and we are reminded of Forrest's first bus ride and how far he has come since his days of being bullied.

The feather that was in the beginning is at the end as well symbolizing destiny. Forrest himself says " I don't know if we each have a destiny, or if we're all just floating around accidental-like on a breeze, I think maybe it's both. Maybe both is happening at the same time. " Forrest couldn't have put

it into better words. During his story we see several characters and watch their life unfold. We know that Lt. Dan had his own ideas for his destiny then his life turned out completely different. Jenny never had a clear path for her destiny, and Forrest only ever wanted to love and be loved by Jenny.