

Good will hunting: a movie that inspires others

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Good Will Hunting, by Gus Van Sant, is a well-respected movie meant to inspire others. It reflects how nature and nurture work together in creating a mature human being. In the film we watch a man with a matured brain go through a struggle between his past and his future. He knows that he is highly intelligent but he chooses not to show it often due to his childhood abuse. While watching the movie, the audience doesn't realize that there is a lot of science being depicted. The movie goes along with the theme of nature versus nurture as well as how the brain generally works. Specifically, the movie seems to focus on the general function of the brain and how different surroundings can make and break the personality of human beings.

As we have learned from *The Accidental Mind*, our brain is ten percent away from being fully developed at the age of 5 (Linden 72). This means that our childhood is crucial to the brain because it is when we are most vulnerable and learn from those around us. Our senses of the world develop causing our brains to develop triggers towards certain actions. In *Good Will Hunting* we watch Will live a troubled life but don't understand why. Eventually we learn that he was abused at a young age after being left by his birth parents. With a horrible childhood, Will learned to be very defensive and left even when things seemed to be perfect. He never learned the concepts of trust and unconditional love. Though not the same, Will's childhood was similar to Genie's from *The Secret of the Wild Child*. Genie was abused and it set her back in life just like Will (Garmon). Although Genie's case was much worse than Will's, they both experienced some of the same feelings of fear and torture. Thus, the same outcomes occurred, they both did not know what love felt like and they both had to take massive strides to live as the people

they came to be (Gamon). Nurture is a necessity for people, especially children, because the way people are raised can greatly affect their future which can also affect the world if the child has a similar brain to Will's.

Though the movie seems to greatly support the side of nurture, genes are a part of how people develop. Roger R. Hock shows us that we are made up of male and female hormones based on a test done by Sandra Bem (Hock 199-207). When we look at Will, he seemed to have a rough masculine appearance according to the test. He was quick to start fights and he was emotionally unresponsive throughout most of the movie. Will hated therapy and when he finally found a person that loved him dearly, he threw that love away for fear of it not working out. These "masculine" traits are often called forms of defense mechanisms. We often see Will perform these kinds of acts and can characterize them as regression and sublimation (Hock 237-238). Though Will is a grown man in the movie, he still acts like a teenager that loves to make fights because that is all he has ever known. The unemotional side of Will can be categorized as a male trait of sublimation because even though he might have desired love, he would always reject it in case the love didn't last. To get a sort of love, he used the girl he met and slept with her for a sense of love. However, as soon as it started to get serious he left her thus showing a sign of regression because he wanted to go back to a time where he was alone.

Overall, Good Will Hunting taught me that everyone has a past and not everyone is normal. Some face tragic and painful pasts that they bottle up inside. On the contrary, people can also live a normal life with their parents,

a nice house, and pets. The honest truth is that you can never really know someone even if you are related to them. Everyone keeps secrets that boil up inside of them and there will always be something to trigger them. One of the worst things to do is run away from fears and life because it can set you back from your true potential. I can see myself in Will because I too have run away from growing up many times in the past couple of years. I was so excited to go to college when I graduated. However, after getting there it wasn't what I expected. I started to try and make it through but I did not try to expand my horizons. As I started to push myself to make friends and create a life for myself I still realized that it wasn't exactly what I wanted. When I realized this I started to run away again because I didn't want to be like some of the people in my life that haven't done much to make their own life. I thought that I was stepping backwards so I took bigger steps backwards in fear of creating the wrong future for myself. In certain ways Will and I could be considered alike because we took steps back in fear of what was to come. Just like Will I always want to be right because I am scared of choosing something that is wrong for me. I think that anyone can relate to Will because most of his life was spent in fear and there isn't a human being that hasn't experienced fear.

The main lesson that can be learned from this Gus Van Sant's Good Will Hunting is that anything can happen. Things and people can change but we just have to be fighters. We need to understand that there are things that we can't change about ourselves and especially other people. A certain percent of our personality is already made within our genes and our lives can be very different from one another due to the ways that we were raised. We have to

have the patience and the acceptance to move on and learn from our mistakes. We also have to take leaps of faith like when Will finally realizes that the girl he let go of could have possibly been the one and chases after her.