

Teenage wasteland

Life



Anne Tyler's short story "Teenage Wasteland" illustrates a mother's struggle to understand and help her child. The story takes place in a middle class neighborhood, where the protagonist Daisy, is a mother of two and a housewife. Daisy tries to help her son Donny, a stubborn and misunderstood teenager. Donny is a troubling teen who is rebellious and always causes misfortune. When Daisy gets a call from the principal of Donny's private school requesting a conference about Donny's poor grades and immature behavior, she does everything she can to help Donny grow and mature by hiring a tutor.

Unfortunately, Daisy discovers that Cal, Donny's tutor, didn't help Donny raise his grade, but instead made his grade drop. Daisy noticed that Donny has showed some improvement in his behavior and attitude in school. Anne Tyler reveals that being a parent is never an easy job, some parents, like Daisy and Matt, have no control over their kids. Throughout Daisy's life she has tried to get a better understanding of Donny, she wants to be around him and wishes to know what he's really like. As a mother Daisy is caring and interested in Donny's well-being, she is insecure because of Donny, and Donny is Daisy's main priority.

Like all mothers Daisy is interested in her child's well-being. In this case, Donny's well-being is all that she cares about. Daisy has gone through so much trouble in the past couple of weeks just for Donny to be happy. Daisy is very curious about Donny, he is very secretive and likes to keep things on the low. "Well? What did you think?" (Tyler. 260). Daisy asks for Donny's opinion, she's wants to know how he feels. Also, it's as if his decision is the only thing that matters to her, she wants to know what his standards are.

Daisy cares for Donny, she wants to communicate with him and get to know him. Daisy is insecure about herself because of Donny's behaviour towards her. Because of the way Donny treats her, Daisy feels no confidence even with the way she dresses. In this case, she is self-conscious because she feels that Donny is uncomfortable being around her. She becomes self-conscious over the slightest things that don't mean anything. " Daisy held in her stomach in and gave Mr. Lanham a firm, responsible handshake"(Tyler. 258). Daisy tries to suck in her stomach when giving a handshake, thinking that she is overweight.

" She wished she'd worn nylons instead of knee socks"(Tyler. 257). Also, she is insecure about the tiniest things like the way she's dressed, she gets concerned over socks thinking that they make her look unprofessional and ignorant. She tries to cover and hide the parts where she is insecure about, like the things that may embarrass her. Daisy's main person of interest seems to be Donny. She finds Donny intriguing, he confuses her with his mixed emotions. In this case, Daisy wants to get to know Donny he confuses her a lot, all mothers are curious about their children.

When she picks Donny up from Cal's he's having a great time, smiling and laughing which Daisy has never seen that side of, but when he gets in the car he becomes mute and irritated a bit. Donny is causing trouble which is gaining him attention, she's putting all her care into him. " She had always told Donny he had talent, was smart, was good with his hands"(Tyler. 258). Donny has always been Daisy's main priority, until his younger sister was born. But even after, he was still her main person of interest.

Daisy puts all her attention into Donny, she tries to figure him out in every way she can, but she can't break him. She doesn't understand Donny and the cause of his actions. Donny tries to avoid his parents in any way he can, he ignores them and gets annoyed over everything they tell him to do. The start of all of Donny's ruckus is what brought Daisy to care about him, and what made him her main person of interest. Throughout Daisy's life she has tried to get a better understanding of Donny, she wants to be around him and wishes to know what he's really like.

To conclude, Daisy's desperate struggle to understanding and getting along with her son, Donny, comes down to them becoming even more like strangers. Daisy's plan on getting along with Donny fails terribly due to the cause of her hiring Cal, Donny's tutor. Soon she discovers that the cause of Donny acting rebellious, is because she didn't care too much about him before. If Daisy would have accepted Donny the way he was, and focused more on other things than him it would have probably turned out differently and he wouldn't have run away.