

Good will hunting essay

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In modern media, there are themes for every film, television show, and magazine.

These themes pertain to every individual's life in one way or another. Given the opportunity to choose one piece of work to discuss, I chose the film "Good Will Hunting." Good Will Hunting is a drama film from 1997 that revolves around the main character Will Hunting.

The movie displays several themes, and portrays them in rather dynamic ways. However, the aspect I find most intriguing about the film is its lack of a tangible antagonist. Rather, the antagonist is Will himself, and the internal battles he seems to consistently face on a day to day basis. These "battles" include fear, or hesitancy with which Will proceeds to try new things and experience things that he was previously unfamiliar with. Also trust for others, or better yet, lack there-of.

Finally, Will has to understand that it is possible to be successful regardless of previous situations in life. All of these aspects together become extremely interesting as the viewer is able to watch Will mature, and learn how to cope with these issues. The film opens many thoughts for one to even question about their own life; I know it did for me. Fear is perhaps the most evident theme portrayed in Good Will Hunting.

Almost everything Will decides to do within his day to day life is a result of his fear. While there are almost an endless amount of examples of this, I find Will's two largest and most distinct fears are trying new things and commitment. Through the entire film, Will consistently displays resentment towards both. When presented with situations in which proceeding means

leaving the boundaries that he has become accustomed to from early on in his life, Will immediately backpedals, returning to familiar ground. I believe this is also an issue I had throughout the course of my youth, and more than likely even still have. To many people trying new things is more than just a “new experience,” but rather is a complete form of excitement.

It might be exhilarating to be leaving the situations you have grown tired of your whole life, to be trying something new. However, that was not the case for Will or I. Rather, change is something to be rejected, not accepted. I enjoyed my life, I was happy with the way things were.

And, if things are good the way they are, why change them? With every new change comes the possibility of failure, and unfortunately one failure can throw many other things in your life out of sync. So while other people are being as optimistic as possible, simply asking themselves “how fun could this be if it works out?” People like Will and I are a bit more reserved, questioning instead “what is the worst that could come of this?” In such a scenario I feel the negative consequences affect me more negatively than the positive consequences do positively. In this case it is “safer” to continue with things the way they are rather than risking such a negative impact to a life that you are currently content with. The second fear that Will has is the fear of commitment in relationships. When it comes to romantic relationships, Will is more of a “short-term” type of person who doesn’t like to get involved in anything serious. This is something I feel I relate with Will strongly on. Commitment is a scary subject that involves letting someone else into every aspect of your life, letting them know your “deepest secrets.” Once you place this kind of faith in someone, it is as if they have the switch

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to your happiness in their hands, something they could turn off whenever they wish.

If you fall for someone so strongly, relying on them so much, the pain they can cause you by ending such a relationship with you is immeasurable.

Therefore, in Will's eyes, it is much safer to simply avoid such a possibility by not getting involved in such a deep, serious and committed relationship. The next key theme I find portrayed repetitively in Good Will Hunting is that of trust. Will has as hard of a time as anyone you could ever find at trusting other people. One could argue that this is an aspect of the fear theme previously described. However, personally I feel that as apparent as the trust issues in this film are, it is such a big aspect that it literally is its own theme.

Will puts so little trust into other people that a viewer would almost be justified to say he doesn't put any. As a foster child, Will was abused repetitively. While the film never exactly says how frequent this abuse was, viewers will get the feeling that it was a rather abundant, and subconsciously Will blames himself for this unhappy upbringing. As a direct result of this abuse, Will puts on a false exterior.

He does his best to display himself to be as happy as possible, while internally he hates himself. There are only a few people Will actually trusts, and that is because they have been his best friends since they were young kids. And yet, even Will's best friends are unable to tell that he has built up emotion within himself, and is constantly having these internal battles with the abuse from his foster childhood. Besides these few friends, Will trusts no

one else, and really will never give anyone the chance. After being hurt so frequently whenever he tried to do so, he has since given up.

I feel as though I relate to Will when it comes to the inability to trust others. My reasons however, are different. Unlike Will, I was not physically abused, something I am grateful for. But I still feel like I was betrayed on several occasions whenever I would attempt to place trust in other people.

Numerous times I would get to know someone and I would begin feeling comfortable and trusting them far more prematurely than I would ever now. There have been too many instances in my past when I would trust others to be there for me when I needed them, and too frequently was I let down. These days, it is much easier to simply avoid such situations by not allowing people I meet to know too much about myself and to not expect much, if anything from them in return.

The friends and family I already have and who have been there for me my whole life are the select individuals I trust to continue to be there for me in the future. I know that, sooner or later this has to gradually change, because it is unrealistic to think I can go the rest of my life without getting close to anyone else ever again, but at this point it's easier to not have to worry about whether or not someone is going to betray me again. The final theme displayed in Good Will Hunting is the ability to achieve success despite coming from such an unfortunate upbringing. Will has an extremely difficult time with such thoughts. As I have stated, Will has grown up his whole life knowing nothing but failure, and as a result of blaming himself for it, failure is all he has ever come to expect. Will is intellectually a genius, but lives the

lifestyle of a South Boston construction worker. He has extraordinary talents, but rarely puts them to good use towards anything that will benefit him in the form of a successful career.

Even when presented with the opportunity to work with a Fields Medal recipient toward the continued study of extremely advanced modern day mathematics, Will laughs it off as a joke. Even Will's best friends are baffled as to why Will is still hanging around South Boston working the same jobs they are. At one point in the film his best friend Chuckie even tells will " if your still hanging around here in 10 years, I'll kill you. Obviously, Chuckie is being facetious about the threat to kill him, but completely serious and genuine about the desire for his best friend to move on with his life and accept the fact that there are much greater " callings" out there in the world for a man of his intellect.

Clearly, I am not of genius-level intellect, nor a prodigy. But I am of the opinion that I understand where Will is coming from in his disbelief that he can succeed in life. While this almost ties into the fear theme, Will is so scared of failure when he's content with where he currently is in his life, that he doesn't even try. There are things in life that people can do to " just get by" and live their life.

Of course, this will not result in the most exciting life, or fulfilling even. But when you are afraid of what could become of trying to succeed and failing, sometimes staying where you are seems like a much easier decision. For example, if Will were to leave South Boston and the only people he trusts to move to a big city and try to do things more suitable for a mind like his,

there is always a possibility he would be rejected wherever he went. In which case, he would then be even more unsatisfied with his life than he was in the first place. And, what is worse, is that there is always the possibility of if he was to ever return to Boston, his best friends, the only people he has ever truly trusted, might not be there when he gets back. This is a dilemma that for Will is too much trouble to even consider.

Good Will Hunting is a film abundant with themes. Whether it be trying new things, relationships, commitment, trust, or success, there is a fear bestowed within Will that should he ever go beyond his comfort level there is always the possibility that he will just be in an even worse situation than he is already in. Now while I may not be in the exact same state of mind or situation as Will, I can undoubtedly understand and in some instances relate to the feelings and thoughts he has. Everyone has to make choices, every day. Unfortunately sometimes these choices, no matter how small, can affect various aspects of your life at which point it just seems much easier to stay where you are, doing the things you are doing and living the life you are familiarized with.