

Obsessive
compulsive disorder
as portrayed in the
movie as good as it
gets essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the movie *As Good As It Gets* it is very easy to see that the main character is portraying a man that has obsessive compulsive disorder. I chose to study this movie because although it is a comedy, the movie discusses a subject that is commonly stereotyped. I was anxious to see whether all the stereotypes that are given to OCD patients are correct. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is characterized by the occurrence of repetitive and distressing intrusive thoughts (obsessions), and compulsive actions and rituals performed to relieve distress or prevent harm related to the obsessions (Moulding, Doron, Kyrios, & Nedeljkovic, 2009).

The main character, Melvin Udall, exhibits the strong desire to control every situation in his life. He becomes extremely upset when his daily routine is interrupted. He even goes as far as to visit his waitress' house to find out why she did not go to work. At first glance, Udall just seems to be a mean person who has no regard for others; however, as the movie progresses one can see how Udall sometimes is conflicted internally between what he says and how he means things. Melvin Udall is a homophobic, antisocial person that suffers from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Udall has a reasoning behind everything that he does, even if most people cannot see it. Most people just see his behavior as antisocial, but according to Udall, his behavior are necessary in order to maintain order in his world. In *As Good As It Gets* three very unlikely people become good friends through a series of coincidental events. Udall helps his neighbor, Simon Bishop, a homosexual author, by taking care of his dog when he is the victim of a horrible robbery in his apartment. The dog helps Udall grow in his compassion towards people, Carol Connelly in particular.

<https://assignbuster.com/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-as-portrayed-in-the-movie-as-good-as-it-gets-essay/>

Although the reason for caring about her is selfish at first, he continues to help her because he begins to develop actual feelings for her. Connelly's combined hospitality and bluntness are the perfect combination of attitudes that it takes to give Udall a wake up call. All three of these people end up having to go on a road trip together. Throughout the process of the trip each one of them learns something about themselves and therefore come back to their homes with a new image of life.

At the conclusion of the movie, although Udall's OCD is not cured, it is improved and he has made great steps such as forgetting to lock his room when this is usually one of the regular behaviors that he ritualistically goes through. The new, strong emotions that he feels for Connelly make him unable to deal with his life in the same way he used to. At the beginning of the movie Udall does not seem to have a friend in the world. His compulsion to say the first thing that comes to his mind is what drives people away.

The compulsion to say what he thinks may be one of the symptoms of his OCD. People suffer in different ways from OCD. Some of the most common symptoms of OCD include inflated responsibility, the over-importance of thoughts, the importance of controlling one's thoughts, overestimation of threat, intolerance of uncertainty, and perfectionism (Moulding, Doron, Kyrios, & Nedeljkovic, 2009). Many people with OCD are aware that their behavior makes their lives harder, but they cannot help but submit to their strange obsessions.

There are a great number of people who have routines or superstitions that they follow. Having OCD is just the same, except that victims believe awful

things will happen if they do not follow their rituals. They are almost compelled to follow the rituals. In the case of Udall the OCD was severe enough that he needed to have the same routine every day. He also was intolerably rude. His rudeness may have been because of a combination of symptoms such as the over-importance of thoughts and inflated responsibility. As Good As It Gets does an excellent job of depicting a man with OCD.

Although most movies that deal with medical conditions usually negatively stereotype the characters, this movie was surprisingly accurate in its description of OCD. All of the behavior that Udall exhibited was behavior that regular people that suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder possess. The average person could easily see that Udall was suffering from OCD. Because of the nature of the sickness, OCD is one of the mental illnesses that is very easy to spot. Depending on the severity, the sickness may take over a person's life to the extent that they cannot function normally because of it, such as in the case of Marvin Udall.

Udall's life is not what the average person would consider normal. He is able to deal with his illness without going through much discomfort for a while before some strangers come into his life and turn it upside down. However, one connection that most people might not make is that for normal people that have OCD living with it may prevent much more of a problem than it did for Udall. Udall worked from home and was therefore hardly ever inconvenienced. Most people have to attend a job and pass through all the obstacles they encounter while there as well as on their way to and from there.

<https://assignbuster.com/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-as-portrayed-in-the-movie-as-good-as-it-gets-essay/>

As Good As It Gets is a movie that is a great illustration of how some stereotypes are sometimes true. The main character, Udall, is a perfect example of what a person with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder goes through on a daily basis. The ritualistic behavior and the absurd beliefs make life extremely difficult for the individual. Although all of the symptoms and portrayals of OCD were accurate, people may get the wrong idea of the illness by watching AS Good As It Gets. Most people that suffer from OCD do not suffer to the great degree that Udall did in this movie.