

The shark and the goldfish essay



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I chose “ The Shark And The Goldfish” by Jon Gordon for my book report.

This book is about positive ways to thrive during waves of change and follows a goldfish named Gordy who washes out into the ocean. Gordy has always been taken care of and fed daily, but doesn't know how to act or get food when he is in the ocean. He meets a nice shark named Sammy who teaches him how to find food and take care of himself. The story is a lesson for how you never know what life is going to throw at you and when a new challenge or change comes your way, it is up to you to embrace the change and learn to grow instead of viewing the change as a negative. The lingering question in the beginning of the story is are you a shark or a goldfish and how you can learn to become a shark if you tend to have more goldfish like tendencies. The story begins with Gordy the goldfish playing at the beach with his owner.

It explains how Gordy lived a great life and didn't have any worries. “ He ate, slept, swam, and did twirls in the water any time his humans approached to feed him. He never wanted for anything, especially food. Food was abundant and he was prosperous. Life was good.

” Everything changed when a big wave came onto the beach and carried Gordy out to sea. He was frightened and panicked, wondering who would feed him now. Not knowing how to gather food for himself, Gordy was nearly starved when he met Sammy the shark who decided he would teach Gordy how to act like a shark and get food for himself. Sammy explained to Gordy what he needed to change in order to survive in the ocean by saying, “ Your

problem is that you are a goldfish. You are waiting to be fed. That's fine during the fat times when all sorts of people are feeding you.

But you're in the ocean now. Times are a changin'. Things are a little tougher here. You have to work a little harder. You need to be a little smarter.

You need to change your thinking. You need to become a shark. Goldfish wait to be fed. Sharks go out and find food. Now let me show you how to be a shark and we'll go find food together.

" Sammy was trying to show Gordy how to react to the change in a positive way. He let him know that food wouldn't be given to him any longer and that it would be up to Gordy to fend for himself. By accepting the change and working with the new resources he had, Gordy was able to start the process of embracing the change and turning it into a learning experience where he could grow. While Sammy taught Gordy how to act like a shark, he wrote many important lessons on the coral reef for Gordy to use as a guide. He inspires Gordy to want to change and shows him how this situation can actually be seen as something good instead of Gordy thinking the worst and viewing this as a problem.

Sammy tells Gordy " As a shark in training you believe you can influence your situation and your outcome by your positive thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Yes, it's true that you can't control the events in your life. You can't control the fact that you were hit hard by a wave of change. But you can control your positive thoughts and your positive responses to these events and challenges, and in turn this will determine the outcome. " This is a great piece of advice for Gordy or anyone to use. Like Sammy said, the fate of a

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situation is how you choose to react to them and whether or not you embrace the wave of change and turn it into good, or let the wave of change hit you and don't get back up.

If you stay positive throughout the changes happening in your life, you will stay on top and turn the change into a learning point in life. If you see the change as a positive, not only will the outcome turn out more positive, you will also be more likely to overcome the change and not let it defeat you. It's all about how you choose to face the wave and if you decide to ride it out or not. Sammy also explained that many times the wave of change allows someone to start over. It washes everything else away and allows the person to start fresh and grow better because of the change. Sammy left Gordy to gather food by himself for a bit and told him that there would be other fish that would give him grief and trouble for being a goldfish in the ocean.

Sammy told Gordy to do his best to ignore the negative words that might be said to him and to remain as positive as possible. Once Gordy lost the positive, he could become defeated. Another insightful lesson Sammy told Gordy was " You can choose to listen to the cynics and doubters and believe that success is impossible or you can tune them out, strengthen your belief, and know that with faith and an optimistic attitude all things are possible. You can listen to all the negative voices or focus on your positive choices. " Sammy goes on even further to explain that you can react to change in one of two ways; with faith or with fear. He suggests going with faith because why not believe in a positive future where great things will come your way? It is much better to have faith in the future than to be doom and gloom with changes you are faced with.

By choosing fear, you hurt your chances of success. I agree with these statements. If you believe in yourself and the actions you make, you will be much more likely to succeed and to enjoy the ride you embark on. After successfully finding food on his own and overcoming the naysayers he encountered along the way, Gordy realized that he was happy that he found enough food to survive, but that he didn't want to just survive, he wanted to thrive. He decided that if he was going to have to get food every day, he wanted to learn to be as successful at it as possible.

Sammy thought this was great news and explained to Gordy what he does in order to thrive for himself as well when he said " If you want to thrive you have to be more than just be positive. Being positive is essential and it's where all success starts. But to thrive you must work harder than everyone in the ocean. There's no substitute for hard work. Most fish want to think that I'm successful at finding food because I'm a shark.

They think that I was chosen to find food and born lucky. But what they don't see is that I work harder than everyone. I believe the harder you work and the more positive you are, the luckier you become. I'm also more focused than they are and this is the second reason I thrive.

I focus more than others. " This is another important lesson I am taking with me from Sammy. I think that if you set your mind on a goal or with a project, you are going to have a better outcome if you stay positive and put in 110%. The harder you work and the stronger you believe in something, the better it is going to become and the happier you are with the results. If you are

focusing on achieving a certain goal, you are going to have the most success when you work the hardest and to your highest potential.

Skating by is only going to get you so far in life and you will have to push yourself if you ever want to thrive. By setting up goals or checkpoints along the way and following those guides, you are going to succeed. Gordy used the lessons from Sammy and created a daily goal for himself. “ He theorized that if you believed it was too late in life to create the life you want, then it was; but if you were willing to improve and learn a new skill, you would. He knew that no matter how much food he caught and how much he thrived he needed to stay humble and hungry.

Humble enough to learn every day and hungry with a passion to become the best food finder he could be. ” I think following the motto of “ if at first you don’t succeed, try and try again” is another good one to use in life. I think that saying matches up well with the lessons in this story. You might be hit with a wave of change or have something spring up unexpectedly in life, but you must work your hardest to overcome those challenges and truly push yourself if you want to thrive.

Either way, the more positive you are the more likely you are to succeed and the more likely you are to see these changes as a good thing versus seeing it as a negative experience. If the results you want don’t happen right away, don’t give up. Just work a little harder the next time around in the hopes that your goals will be met. The story concludes with Gordy opening up a shark school to help other fish like the way Sammy helped him.

He didn't get many students the first day of school, but the few that did come learned a lot from his teachings and spread good words about the school. The next day, hundreds of fish showed up to Gordy's school and over time Gordy was able to help thousands of fish and teach them how to be more like a shark. In the end Gordy was able to take the following lesson with him. " There would be those who would believe and receive his message and apply the principles and those who would ignore the teachings and spend a lifetime complaining, blaming, and wondering why they were starving. But those who applied the principles and lessons would navigate the sea of adversity and waves of change and enjoy a full stomach and a life of abundance.

He had seen it happen in his own life and knew that life was too short to live any other way. " I think the messages in this story are things that I will use moving forward and would suggest this book to anyone else looking to improve their outlook on life and how they approach change. I am glad that Gordy was able to apply the principles that Sammy taught him and use them to create a better life than he had before. Although Gordy was living a happy life with his owners that fed him, he didn't know a life other than that of luxury where everything was provided to him. I think this wave of change hit him and helped him become a better fish.

Without this change, Gordy wouldn't have learned all the great life lessons and wouldn't have set up shark school to teach other fish how to improve their lives. By staying positive and working extremely hard, Gordy was able to ride the wave and turn it into a great experience. Looking back on my experiences, I can relate with Gordy on a few occasions where I was faced

with change, but took the positive approach and turned it into a great learning experience. However, there have also been times where I have let the negativity outweigh the positive and could have benefitted from using the principles in this book for a better result. I will definitely use this story in my life moving forward and am glad I chose this book for my book report.

It was an easy read and I enjoyed the fable since it had a great theme and the storyline made the subject matter enjoyable to both read and absorb. I can see myself being a shark, or at least trying my best to be a shark, for any obstacles that might come my way and I am confident I can use these principles and lessons to my advantage.