

Psychological film analysis: silver linings playbook



- Hannah Altom

Silver Linings and Family

Pat Solitano had several tremendously difficult months under his belt when he was let go from his stay at the psychiatric hospital. He came out only to discover that his wife, Nikki, had left him leaving him with nothing but a restraining order following the acts that put him there to begin with. Now under the care of his parents, Dolores and Pat Senior they realize that they can only deal with so much of Pat's unpredictable behavior before breaking. One would hardly call waking up their parents in the middle of the night to find their wedding video with their significant other who has a restraining order because he assaulted his wife's other lover, a much older man.

The fragile relationship between the two strengthened after the late night fight over Pats missing wedding video. Pat Seniors obsession with betting on Philadelphia Eagles on complicates their father son relationship when Pat senior attempts to make Pat join in on his crazy game day antics which includes wearing jerseys, stroking the handkerchief and not messing with the Eagles "juju" Pat thinks its just his dads form of a mental illness. Throughout the movie we see Pat struggling to search for the silver linings which he will not see until he comes to terms with his illness. With his father recently being let go from work Pat Senior is hoping to win enough money from betting on Eagles games to win enough money to open up a restaurant. Pat Senior shares an important thought telling Pat, " I'm telling you, you gotta pay attention to the signs. When life reaches out with a moment like this, it's a sin if you don't reach back. I'm telling you, it's a sin if you don't reach back, and it'll haunt you for the rest of your days like a curse. You're facing a

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big challenge in your life right now, at this very moment, right here.” I think the fact that Pat Senior shows symptoms of obsessive compulsive shows that the two are more alike than they would like to think. In one scene Pat Senior even confesses that his Philadelphia Eagles ritual is the only way he can think of to involve his son in his life.

I found it interesting that Pat’s mother Delores was so submissive. Anytime she would try to get involved in a situation she would back down just to keep the peace between them all. For example, the scene where Pat and Pat Senior are talking about how he is going to get the money to pay for his cheese steak restaurant “ Pat Jr.: So what are you doing with yourself? Pat Senior: You know, I’m gonna start a restaurant. It’s gonna be a cheesesteak place. Pat: How you gonna pay for it? Pat Senior: I’m gonna pay for it, don’t worry about it. Pat: From your bookmaking? Pat Senior: Who told you that? Pat: Mom told me. Outside. Dolores: I did not. No, I didn’t. Pat: You just told me outside, Mom, what are you talking about? Five minutes ago, we were walking up the stairs, you said, “ Don’t say anything, but Dad lost his job and he’s bookmaking.” This is a perfect example of her submission and trying to keep peace.

In her study, *Social Support and Resilience to Stress*, Dr. Faith Ozbay found that “ Numerous studies indicate social support is essential for maintaining physical and psychological health. The harmful consequences of poor social support and the protective effects of good social support in mental illness have been well documented. Social support may moderate genetic and environmental vulnerabilities and confer resilience to stress.” This ties into The Silver Linings playbook because, given the situation of Pat finding his <https://assignbuster.com/psychological-film-analysis-silver-linings-playbook/>

wife with a co-worker in the shower that was a very poor social situation and given the circumstances I think any person would go a little crazy to walk in on something like that.

In their study, *Social Support for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness: Evaluating the Compeer Model of Intentional Friendship*, the authors noted that “ In the general population, social support buffers against stressful life events, increases adherence to medical treatments, and improves recovery from medical illness, among other health-promoting effects. For people with Serious Mental Illness, perceptions of adequate social support are associated with several psychological benefits, including increased self-esteem, feelings of empowerment, functioning, quality of life, and recovery, while the absence of social support appears related to greater psychiatric symptoms, poorer perceptions of overall health, and reduced potential for full community integration” This is an important study because all of the factors relate to Pat and his family. If they all had supported each other more and confronted their illnesses, then possibly the bipolar outburst wouldn't have been so strong.

In her study, *Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health*, Peggy Thoits explains why social support and “ mattering” are important to people that have mental illness.“ Individuals assess the appropriateness of their own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors against standards that are avowed and/or modeled by reference group members, usually shifting their own to match those of the group. Such influence can occur through simple observing and contrasting of self with others in the social network, without explicit discussion or attempts at persuasion taking
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place.” This can also tie into the Silver Linings Playbook, there are multiple scenes where a neighbor kid hangs around their house with a video camera and this negative social support from the neighbor could possibly be taking a toll on Pat Junior. Peggy also goes on to say, “ Beyond behavioral guidance, I have argued that knowing who we are to others also provides purpose and meaning in life, which in turn guard against anxiety and existential despair. A concept related to this function of role identities is “ mattering”, mattering is defined as believing that one is an object of another person’s attention, one is important to that person, and he or she depends on one for fulfillment of specific needs. Because mattering refers to one’s significance to other people, it seems conceptually close to the notion of obtaining purpose and meaning in life from relationships with role partners. In sum, social ties as role identities should supply behavioral guidance and purpose and meaning in life (or a sense of mattering), which in turn should have positive effects on health habits and psychological well-being, respectively.” This theory of mattering is important in dealing with mental illness and just people in general because mostly everyone wants to know that they are wanted by others. Consider a lonely 17 year old girl in highschool constantly dealing with petty high school drama that is pondering that thought of suicide. If this poor girl had someone in her life, a teacher, coach, or even a friend that could fulfill that sense of mattering, then it could greatly change her views of the world and her views on possibly taking her life.

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