

Guilty, the uncommon motivator

[Business](#)



Great Expectation is a famous novel written by Charles Dickens. It tells about the life story of a poor orphan called Pip. Through his characters' different emotions, Dickens reflects the society of his time. One particular unifying emotion used is guilt. Although guilt is normally assumed to be a negative factor in one's life, it is a positive motivator in the novel.

Ultimately, Pip changes his personality and is redeemed because of the guilt in his heart. Pip's guilt towards Joe assists him to cherish the friendship that the two has. After Pip is elevated to the upper class, he looks down on Joe and thinks that Joe is a lowly person who does not display a gentleman's manner. Therefore, Pip tries to avoid his brother-in-law by returning to Miss Havisham's house despite telling Joe he is coming back home. Furthermore, when Joe goes to London to visit Pip, Pip is disrespectful in his treatment and view of him; he makes Joe feel low and uncomfortable.

Conversely, in Joe's mind, Pip is his best friend, and he is willing do anything for other when help is needed. Eventually, Pip realizes his ingratitude towards Joe and changes back to treating Joe as his best friend, after realizing that Joe never changed his attitude even though Pip was ungrateful to him. This transformation occurs when Pip becomes ill after Magwitch is caught and sent to the court. At that time, Herbert is developing his own industry, and Mr. Jaggers is no longer taking charge of the properties for Pip.

Thus, no one has the responsibility to support Pip. However, Joe shows up and takes care of him allowing him to finally realize that Joe had always viewed Pip as his best friend. Consequently, Pip feels guilty about all the

things he has done to Joe. “ Oh Joe, you break my heart! Look angry at me, Joe. Strike me, Joe. Tell me of my ingratitude.

Don’t be so good to me!” (414) It can be seen that Pip feels guilty, but he has nothing to pay back Joe with. Pip wants Joe to strike him for Pip feels ashamed about how rude he is and how Joe never blamed Pip because of his cold behavior. Thus, he changes his impolite attitude towards Joe and becomes kind again. Subsequently, Pip tells Joe that he is grateful for this experience, “ I’m thankful that I have been ill” (421). Because of his illness, Pip understands Joe, and their relationship becomes closer.

Pip is glad, because this event affords him a chance for self-realization and self-improvement. Thus, guilt is a positive motivator for Pip, because it reminds Pip to cherish his friendship with Joe and transforms him into a better person with more kindness and gentleness. The guilt that Pip has for Magwitch also makes Pip learn to appreciate and be grateful to his benefactor even though he is “ lower” than Pip. At first when Magwitch shows up as Pip’s benefactor, Pip is shocked and disappointed. His expectation is broken for he had assumed Miss Havisham was his benefactor.

Discovering that Magwitch is his financial supporter breaks Pip’s imagination of a bright future with Estella as his wife. Pip does not accept this fact, because he looks down on Magwitch for being a convict. Thus, Pip is prideful in front of the criminal and never appreciates or is grateful for what Magwitch’s support. Eventually though, Pip learns about Magwitch’s past and how Magwitch devoted his life to making Pip a gentleman. Pip, then, feels

guilty and changes his attitude towards the man. “ For now, my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted, wounded, shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years” (399) .

Pip is Magwitch’s reason for striving so hard in the life. Even in the darkest times, Magwitch never gives up living, because he wants to send Pip to the upper class and make him a gentleman without expecting any payments. Pip, here, faces his guilt directly when he realizes how difficult Magwitch’s life has been, and at the same time, Pip realizes how ungrateful he was. He feels, guilty because he understands that he hurt Magwitch with his aloofness and pride. Magwitch risked his life to visit Pip only for the latter to reject any shows of thankfulness. As evident through the excerpt, Pip eventually accepts Magwitch as his benefactor and respects him.

In addition, Pip changes his attitude towards class. He no longer only appreciates the people in the upper class and learns to be thankful and grateful of the people who actually help him. When he treats Magwitch with the same thankfulness he has had before for Miss Havisham, Pip finally becomes a respectful gentleman. After Pip is elevated to the upper class, his newfound money brings him not only opportunities but also a pompous personality. However, he eventually realizes this flaw and improves himself out of guilt. He learns to cherish friendships and to appreciate the help of others.

Through his example, it can be seen that guilt is not always a negative influence in life. Guilt is perceived when one discovers what one did wrong. Consequently, this also may lead to one's self-improvement to become a better person and rid of one's bad personalities. It is not embarrassing to be guilty, but it is shameful to do nothing about the guilt. Although it is an uncommon motivator, it supports people positively on the way to self-improving.