

The old man and the sea essay



**ASSIGN
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The Old Man and the Sea is a story about a man named Santiago who must face many obstacles in order to obtain and keep his prize, which is a marlin.

Santiago, in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old man and the Sea*, faces many overwhelming obstacles; however, it is through the overcoming of these obstacles that Santiago achieves inner success. At the beginning of his journey, Santiago's main objective was to simply catch a fish, a huge marlin but unforeseen difficulties forced Santiago to look at himself in a different light. With great persistence, Santiago triumphed over his own self-doubt, self-defeat and pride and ends his journey with an enormous sense of accomplishment and many lessons learned. There were many times Santiago was in situations in which he did not believe in himself but triumphing over those situations is what gave him his success over self-doubt. When Santiago was alone out at sea he constantly longed for Manolin's help to catch the marlin because Manolin had always helped him out with everything. When Santiago was at home, he was hardly ever alone because Manolin usually spent most of his free time with Santiago.

' . . . I wish I had the boy. ' But you haven't got the boy, he thought.

You have only yourself and you had better work back to the last line now, in the dark or not in the dark and cut it away and hook up two reserve coils'" (51-52). This statement made by Santiago shows he feels lonely because Manolin is not with him. Santiago also feels insecure without the help Manolin provides him and doubts himself without it. Santiago has success over his insecurities of loneliness by forcing himself to stop thinking about Manolin. He does this by using work to occupy his mind and time, instead of

thinking about Manolin and slowly those insecurities of loneliness of disappear. Santiago is not as young and strong as he used to be and this causes him to feel that his health could be a barrier in his way of catching the marlin but by removing this barrier he gains more confidence.

““ Cramp then if you want... it will do you no good”” (58).

This sentence tells the reader that the cramp causes Santiago to worry that his age and health will not allow him to catch the marlin. He feels this way because he is old and does not have the strength that he had when he was a young man and he needs all the strength he can get. To get rid of the cramp in his left hand, Santiago eats the Bonito to give his cramped hand strength and then lets it rest. He decides to use his right hand, which does not have a cramp, to do all the work. As a result the cramp slowly starts to un-knot giving him not only a sense of relief and a boost of confidence but success over self-doubt of age. The fact that the marlin is in the water and Santiago cannot see it at all times causes great worry for him but when he overcomes this obstacle he has lost self-doubt of his intellect and instincts.

The marlin at any time could've done something unexpected and get away. This forced Santiago to always think ahead and predict the marlin's every move. “ The old man would have liked to keep his hand in the salt water longer but he was afraid of another sudden lurch by the fish and he stood up and braced himself . .

. ” (57). This action of Santiago's shows us he is very alert of all the marlin's actions and is constantly watching out for anything fishy. Since, Santiago doesn't know what the marlin is thinking or planning to do he is always

prepared for the unexpected causing him to gain more trust in his instincts and not doubt his intellect. Santiago's success over self-doubt is what allows him to lose all insecurities about his abilities and truly believe in himself. Santiago's determination to have success over self-defeat is one of the main reasons he captured the marlin and kept it in his possession for a while after.

Santiago was hurt and felt ill many times while trying to catch the marlin. This statement "The old man felt faint and sick and he could not hear well" (94). He paints a picture in the reader's mind of all the pain Santiago was undergoing but still went on trying to catch the fish. Santiago did not let the pain get in the way of what he wanted and eventually after never giving up he finally got it. Even after Santiago caught the marlin he faced many challenges ahead and fighting the sharks was one of those challenges.

"' Fight them,' he said ' I'll fight them until I die'" (115). This type of attitude from Santiago shows the reader that he is a very wilful person. It shows them that although he is still in pain and exhausted after everything he has already gone through he is still willing to fight to keep the marlin. The fact that Santiago would rather give up his life than lose the marlin, which he worked so hard to catch shows the reader his determination to not allow himself to give into self-defeat and just let the sharks win.

Instead Santiago continues to fight no matter how tired he is or how much pain he may be feeling. When the sharks had taken away almost all of Santiago's defences to fight them he still continued to try and fight them off. "' But I will try it as long as I have the oars and short club and tiller'" (112).

This statement made by Santiago shows the reader he will use even the

most useless objects to fight the sharks off, so he would not allow himself to be defeated. Santiago was not going to let the loss of his weapons get in his way of keeping the marlin; he was willing to resort to almost anything.

Although, in the end the sharks did take away the marlin; Santiago had never given in to self-defeat and was truly a winner for being so determined to never give up.

Santiago's success over self-defeat was a valuable lesson, it taught him to keep on trying even when you think you can do no more, it was that success that was a part of the reason he caught the marlin in the first place. Pride can be the fall of a man and Santiago learned this lesson the hard way, however, his achievement of success over pride was a huge gain for him. Santiago was constantly telling the marlin he would kill it or stay with it forever until it died. This shows that Santiago had a lot of pride in himself because he believed that no fish could beat him and he was so bent on catching the marlin but by the end he did not care if he caught it or not. When Santiago says, " Come on kill me.

I don't care who kills who" (92). It shows the reader that Santiago finally realized all the pain he underwent and caused was not worth catching the marlin. Unlike at the beginning of his journey when he thought he was right to keep on trying to catch the marlin. Santiago gained a realization which allowed him to understand his limits and what he could and could not do.

Another example, of how Santiago gained something for his achievement of success over pride was shown through Manolin. Manolin always looked up to Santiago, to him Santiago was flawless. However, when Santiago admitted

his mistake to Manolin, Santiago believed he would no longer be flawless in Manolin's mind because he made a mistake. When Santiago says, "' They beat me, Manolin,' he said ' They truly beat me'" (124). It depicts an image in the reader's mind that Santiago feels humiliated to have come back with nothing.

However, Manolin still sees him as a flawless person. This causes Santiago to gain insight for the true meaning of a friend. Manolin never deserted Santiago simply because he made a mistake he looked at who Santiago was as a person and not at what he could or could not do. As a result Santiago also gained a lifelong companion. Santiago always believed that he was never wrong to go so far out at sea; he thought catching the marlin was worth it however, another incident that changed that attitude was when the sharks started attacking him.

When Santiago says to the marlin, "' I shouldn't have gone out so far, fish,' he said. ' Neither for you nor for me. I'm sorry fish'" (110). It shows the reader that he realises his mistakes and repents for them. When Santiago first hooked the huge fish he was so determined to catch the fish that he didn't even think twice about what going out so far at sea could've cost him.

Santiago felt that no man could ever lose so much at the hands of a fish and he was proven wrong. Santiago's success over pride in this situation allowed him to gain the knowledge of never letting pride get in the way of logical thought. One of Santiago's greatest successes was success over pride because it is what taught him what his limits are and how far is too far. Being able to make mistakes is easy but understanding them and learning from

them is the hardest of all but something Santiago was able to accomplish successfully. Santiago's success over the overwhelming amount of obstacles he faced is what made his achievement of inner success worthwhile and lifelong.

Success over self-doubt, self-defeat and pride is what taught him to believe in himself and understand his mistakes and capabilities. Some lessons in life in life are hard to learn and others easy, however, Santiago was unfortunate enough to learn them the hard way. The greatest success in life is learning from your mistakes and understanding them so you won't make them again.