

Role model: atticus finch

Business



What is a role model? A role is a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially younger people. Role models can come in any shape, size, or color.

A role model proves to be essential to children and their development into adulthood. When children choose a role model, they aspire to be exactly like that person. Children choose role models by the people who influence their lives from a young age. Sometimes, children choose role models who influence them in a negative way; but not always. Like anything in society, there are the good and bad examples; it is up to the individual child to decide if they want their role model to be someone positive or negative. The person a child looks up to shapes the path they want to take in their life.

Most children choose someone from their family, which includes their parents and siblings, to be their role model in life. Parents and siblings prove to be an important role model in their child's life, the actions and attitude towards their children influence their life; such as in the case of the Ewells and Finches in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Children look up to the people around them to be their role models, especially their family. Swayamjyoti Ray explained what a role model is in his article "Role Models": "Role models are people who are admired for the way they act and for their professionalism, and whose behavior is considered as a standard of excellence to aspire to. They are the people in positions that we would like to reach; they possess qualities that we would like to have; and they are the people with whom we can identify with. So many children choose their family as role models, because they aspire to be like them."

But sometimes, family life is not all that great. A children's family structure dictates their life, because their family is their role model. If children are from an abusive family, that is what they aspire to be like. The path of abuse is continuous, because that is all they know. Children look up to their parents, especially, and hope to follow in their footsteps.

But what happens when those footsteps are not in the right path? The effects of bad parenting are shown in the book *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Lee introduces two main families: the Finches and the Ewells. The families are complete opposites. The Finches are high-class and a respectable family, while the Ewells are white trash with respect for no one, including each other. Jean Louise "Scout" Finch looks up to her father as role model, while Burris Ewell also looks up to his dad as his role model too.

The way each parent acts is shown to influence the children based on the way they act. Atticus encourages the children to go to school and further their educations which will help them become successful later in life, like in his life. Burris Ewell, like the other Ewells, only goes to school the first day, because their father does not influence them and inform them education is important. The Ewell father, Bob, does not emphasize the importance of education to his children who look up to him as a role model and also think it is not important in their life. " They (parents) serve as models of self-esteem and self-control, setting clear and consistent rules of behavior (Lawrence, " What's Happening to Our Children?" <http://sks.sirs.com>).

Children look up to their parents as role models, so often their views and actions influence the way their children act. Children try to mimic

their role models behavior, so if that behavior is negative, the children's behavior will also mimic that negative behavior they witnessed. " Violence is learned very early in life, and learned well, said Dr.

Leonard Eron, a psychologist at the University of Michigan." Children try to behave with what they see from their role models. This also can be referenced to the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Burris Ewell talks rudely to the teacher, Miss Fischer, when she is concerned about his hygiene and his lice. The reader may wonder where he learned that behavior, but later on we find out.

When his father and sister go to trial, they both talk rude and use informal speech. The reader can infer that since Burris had learned this behavior through his family, which is his role model in life. The importance of role modeling effects how children turn out in life. The way their role models treat the world around them, is the behavior they learn and mimic, such as in the case of the Ewells and Finches in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Children are affected from the environment that their role model lives in and experiences. Children see their role model's life and want to live that same life.

But sometimes, home environment from which role models come from are negative and may even experience child maltreatment. Child maltreatment effects the children in various ways, especially when it is their own role model, because that is who they look up to (Lamont, 1). " Child maltreatment is a generic term referring to four primary acts: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect ([www. cyc-net. org](http://www.cyc-net.org)).

" In *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, the reader can infer that the Ewell children experience possibly all four types of maltreatment from their role model: their family and especially the father. The reader can infer about the physical abuse the father inflicts upon his children because of what happened in the court case. Tom Robinson could not have hurt Mayella because of his handicapped arm and the reader can infer that Bob, left the marks of abuse on her. The emotional abuse is seen because of how the children behave in school, like Burris. The reader can also determine they are neglected from their parental figures of the household because Burris has lice and does not seem to care. Where did his lack of concern over hygiene come from? The behavior was learned from his role model, his father.

The reader knows Bob has a lack of interest in appearances because when he appears in court he dresses in casual day-to-day cloths and uses vernacular language. Atticus dresses formally for court and speaks politely to everyone. Atticus's children are dressed well and know how to take care of themselves and their personal hygiene. We know that the Ewell children are neglected based on how they dress and how they act. " It's against the law, all right," said my father, " and it's certainly bad, but when a man spends his relief checks on green whiskey his children have a way of crying from hunger pains.

... any " game their father can hit." (Lee, Chapter 3) Based on the novel by Harper Lee, the reader can see how children and their role model's environment and their own can effect and imprint their life. A role model's resilience also carries over to the individual child's own resilience. "

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Resilience refers to the ability of a child to cope and even thrive after a negative experience (www. aifs.

gov. au).” If a child sees their role model cope with stress in a negative way, they also learn to cope in that same negative way. The Ewells take the stress of the court case to extreme lengths and measures. When Atticus embarrasses Bon Ewell in front of the jury, Bob threatens Atticus.

The Ewell children learn from their role model, their father, that when someone embarrasses them that they should confront them and fight over the situation. Atticus proves to be the better role model for his children than Bob Ewell for his children. Atticus does not attack Bob Ewell but just accepts his threats and walks away being the bigger person. Atticus’s children can use him as a role model and learn that sometimes it takes more strength and courage to walk away rather than stay and fight. The behavior learned through role models are important life lessons for the children who look up to them.

Parents and siblings act as role models and make a huge impact on that child’s life, whether they know it or not. Role models have a huge impact on a child’s life, which was displayed through the novel *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. A role model can be anyone who has an impact on a child’s life, especially family members. The environment from which children develop will affect their overall outlook on the world and the people in it. Parents and siblings prove to be some of the biggest role models in a child’s life.

The way a family treats a child is the behavior the child learns and will carry in to adulthood. If maltreatment does occur, children often get a negative

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outlook on the world. If the role models are positive the child has something to aspire to be like and try to live their life to be successful, similar to their role model. Overall, role models make the footprints that the child who looks up to them will follow in. Parents and siblings prove to make the biggest imprint on a child's life, such as displayed in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.