

# Conrad vs holden



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Ordinary People and The Catcher in the Rye: Reckless Actions In current day society, people strive for the untangible feeling of happiness. Genuine happiness can develop a person to become lovable; however, the nonexistence of happiness may do the complete opposite. Holden a protagonist from the novel, The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger, and Conrad the main character from the movie, Ordinary People, are searching for this happiness within their own lives. However, they are unable to find it because of the solidarity that they feel between their friends and families.

The loneliness and the decreasingly lack of joy in Conrad's and Holden's lives triggers them to make decisions that would lead to consequences which would negatively affect their surrounds in the future. The absence of happiness within the lives of Holden and Conrad causes them to act reckless in different ways that ultimately harms himself and people around him. Throughout the movie Conrad makes many impulsive decisions that harms his friends, family members, and also himself.

The first wrong decision that started the domino effect on the other wrongful decisions that he makes, is the fact that he didn't come back to shore when he and his brother, Buck, saw " how bad the weather was becoming" while they were sailing. This decision results to the death of his brother and the event stays in his mind leading to the reckless behavior that begins to engulf his mind. Following, this decision is Conrad's suicidal attempt by cutting his wrists vertically in his bathroom sink.

Although this act puts pain on his family, it mostly affects Conrad physically and emotionally because he has to endure the pain of the slits and the depression that had caused him to make the decision to begin with. Even

after Conrad returns from the hospital he continues to feel the lack of happiness within his own life. The depression causes him to not want to eat the breakfast that his mother makes just for him. Hurt by the rejection, Conrad's mother dumps the meal into the drain and leaves in an abrupt manner.

In addition, much of the bottled up emotions that Conrad keeps causes him to become quite distant with his own family and his friends. This solidarity eventually leads Conrad to lose his past close relationships with them. These impulsive decisions allow Conrad to expand upon his emotions, since in the beginning of the movie he bottles it up and allows it to accumulate over time. Within the novel, Holden displays reckless attitude that results in harming both himself and those around him.

The factor of his reckless behavior begins when Holden runs away from Pencey Prep due to the fact that he gets kicked out and is afraid that his parents would be upset. In turn, Holden decides to live in the city and waits till he is expected to come home. This act eventually leads him to hurt himself mentally because after a time spent in the city, Holden begins to “feel more depressed.. ” and lonely (95). In an act of desperation, Holden tries to fill in his loneliness and sorrows by finding company with a girl named Sally that he “wasn't too crazy about” (105).

However, as Holden and Sally are still on their date, Holden displays his reckless behavior when he insults Sally calling her “a pain in the ass” (133). Sally is thus deeply hurt by the insult and “she was even crying” (134). This act in turn leaves Holden to become lonely and depressed once again. With the feeling of depression weighing on his shoulder, Holden decides to leave

town and head for the west. Phoebe, Holden's kid sister, hearing his plan also wants to tag along as well bringing along her suitcase that contains her personal items.

Even though Holden doesn't want to be alone, he refuses his sister's plea to run away with him and in turn results him to display another act of recklessness. Holden yells at Phoebe telling her to shut up which triggers her to "start to cry" (206). Holden's consideration of leaving Phoebe hurts Phoebe because she really cares about her brother's well being. Since Holden's siblings Allie and D. B are no longer currently living in the household, if Holden were to run away, Phoebe would feel lonely having only her parents as companions.

Holden and Conrad are similar types of characters because they both act recklessly and unintentionally hurt themselves and the people that surround them. Both of the characters punch one of their good friends due to immature decisions. Holden gets into a fist fight with Stradlater since Holden continues to invoke Stradlater about his date with Jane, knowing that a punch to the face would follow the dispute. This act displays that Holden makes wrongful decisions knowing the consequences of the act, however still continuing with the act.

In addition, Conrad also displays reckless behavior by continually punching Stillman out of the remark that Stillman makes of Jeannine. Conrad punches Stillman out of anger and frustration since Dr. Berger, Conrad's psychiatrist, unlocks his emotions; it begins pouring out uncontrollably. With this act of violence, Conrad loses many of his once close friends because his friends now perceive him as "crazy" after the punching incident. Both Holden and

Conrad displays thoughtless decisions by punching their friends in an act of rage which results in the consequences of more hurt.

Even though Holden and Conrad may be similar they are more different than alike because they exhibit different acts of recklessness. While Holden may use strong words and loud voices to harm others, Conrad uses physical actions to harm the ones around him. When Holden was on his date with Sally in the restaurant, he begins to ramble about the future that Sally and Holden could have together. Holden suggests that Sally runs away together with him however Sally rejects his proposal causing Holden to become upset.

This urge that is raging inside of him impulses him to say things that he didn't think through therefore enabling him to insult her. However, this is not the only case in which Holden says things without thinking. In another scenario where he is speaking to Phoebe, Holden tells Phoebe to shut up, he " didn't mean to tell her to shut up ..." but the impulse enabled him to do so (206). On the other hand, Conrad uses his non-thought out actions to affect the people around him. Having Conrad attempting suicide by cutting his wrists vertically harms his family because it causes them to have to worry about their son.

Conrad's parents have already lost a son and if they were to lose another one then it would further devastate their family's reputation and the family would thus fall apart. In addition, due to Conrad's depression it causes him to not have an appetite when eating. Thus, when Conrad's mom makes him breakfast and he refuses, this act causes his mother to become hurt from the rejection and therefore dump the meal in the garbage dispenser. Even so the slightest of actions of Conrad should effect and hurt the people around him.

In conclusion, even though both Holden and Conrad are unintentionally hurting their loved ones, they differently act out recklessly when making out a decision. Both Holden and Conrad are both misunderstood teenagers that are trying find a way to get through the day. This is caused by the fact that their life is missing the genuine happiness that everyone in society searches for. However, at the end of both stories, they eventually achieve their idea of true happiness and therefore can live through the day knowing that they are truly happy.