

Little miss sunshine theme analysis – family essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

At the start of the movie Little Miss Sunshine, it is clear that the Hoover family is unhappy and dysfunctional: with the drug addicted Grandpa, the dad who is blind to the real ' successes' in life and categorises everything and everyone into winners and losers, the nicotine addicted mum who is struggling to keep the family happy, the homosexual, suicidal and depressed uncle Frank, the teenage brother, Dwayne, who has taken a vow of silence until he reaches his goal of becoming a pilot and the main character, Olive who spends her time watching beauty pageant videos and dreams of becoming a beauty queen herself.

Each of the members in the Hoover family represent some of the common issues seen in the society today... these include, bankruptcy, teenage problems, LGBT rights, drug use, depression and suicide. The family members started off by having very different unattainable goals in their personal life. Richard's goal is to become successful by selling his " 9 steps to winning plan" and work his way out of bankruptcy. As the movie goes forward, each of the family members realise that their goals are unable to be achieved.

This was the case for Dwayne and Richard, as Dwayne realised he was colour blind and Richard got to know that Stan Grossman will not sell his program. Only Sheryl's goal, of keeping the family happy, had a possibility of being achieved. Sheryl and Richard, Olive's parents, fail to have establish a good relationship with their children and their role as parents is not completely fulfilled. The family did not give importance to Olive's desires of becoming the " little Miss Sunshine" as they didn't even make an effort to see her routine, which she spent most of her time practising for.

If we were to think like Richard Hoover, we could say that they all start off by being losers. The Volkswagen minibus, symbolises the family structure.

Although it is very old and is not ideal for travelling, the minibus still manages to get the family to California. This is like the Hoover family, who is dysfunctional and unhappy, but still demonstrates love and care for each other by the end of the movie. Until the minibus broke down, the movie was moving along at a slow pace and all characters were very distant from each other as they weren't talking.

After the family had to push the minibus to get it started, the relationship between each family member started to improve as they needed to work together to keep the bus moving. In the road trip, the family faces many challenges, such as the death of Grandpa, the breaking down of the minibus, and the realisation that Dwayne can never be a pilot. The way in which they overcome these challenges contributed to their family improvement. For example, when Grandpa died, each of the family members were very upset but they decided to overcome this grief by taking Grandpa to the beauty pageant with them.

This gave them a reason to be happy even though they were going through a hard time and also allowed them to feel like they are doing something for Grandpa even after his death. When the family is at the beauty pageant, they stand out because they are very different from the people there. The main reason for this is that the Hoover family is not afraid to be themselves while all the other people are putting on fake personalities to fit in.

Also, at the beauty pageant we are able to see a whole different view of Richard. We see him begging to the pageant organiser to sign up Olive, as they were a few minutes late to the signing up time. The pageant organiser, however, judged the family on their appearance and showed no mercy to sign up Olive for the pageant. Earlier in the movie Richard would have seen this as a sign of weakness, but here, he realises how important the pageant was for both his daughter and his father.

The other characters, who used to be focused on their own personal goals, had become more focused on helping each other. Although they have many problems in their personal life, they have tried to concentrate more on making the lives of others better. The movie also gives a new meaning to being beautiful. It shows that people can be beautiful through love and care for each other. When the unhappy dysfunctional family started caring for each other and loving each other, they became more beautiful.

Through overcoming their unhappiness, the Hoover family turned themselves into winners. The road trip brought the family closer, and although it didn't exactly make them a functional family, it helped the family express their love for one another. The ending of the movie can be interpreted in many different ways, but the most obvious interpretation the directors are trying to give the audience is that the Hoover family, with all their unresolved problems, are well on their way of becoming a happy, dysfunctional family.