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Change Minds, Change Reality

Charlie Gordon is a man who wishes that with the power of surgery, can become smart, and understand the world in a clearer way. "Flowers for Algernon," is a fiction short story written by Daniel Keyes. It tells the story of 37-year-old man named Charlie Gordon, who becomes incredibly intelligent after undergoing a risky surgery, but as time goes on, the operation shows its defective sides effects, and demands Charlie to confiscate everything he learned, taking everything away from him, turning him into an empty shell of a body. Change can contribute to problems and conflicts, such as internal, external, and one another.

To start things off, change can contribute to conflict. An example of this is represented, when the main character states, "I dont know why Im dumb agen or what I did wrong maybe its becaus I dint try hard enuff. But if I try and practis very hard maybe Ill get a littl smarter and know what all the words are (306)." Charlie claims this because after he changed and became smarter, out of the sudden, quickly began to lose everything he remembered, causing distress and depression to take over his mental state, while relating to the theme because, it's causing his mind, internal conscious to expire. Another example is demonstrated by the author, "I reread my paper on the Algernon-Gordon Effect and I get the strange feeling that it was written by someone else. There are parts I don't even understand (303)." Charlie implies this statement after the operation, as he forgets everything in his mind, he can no longer read what he wrote himself, he forgets everything, changing because of the surgery, putting him to rest forever. Internal

Conflicts contribute to change because as you or the people around you change, new problems transpire

Furthermore, change can contribute to external conflicts. For instance, Charlie Gordon points out, “It’s a funny thing I never knew that Joe and Frank and the others liked to have me around all the time to make fun of me. Now I know what it means when they say ‘to pull a Charlie Gordon’(293).” This quote relates to an external conflict because, since Charlie became smart after the operation, he was able to figure out that his “friends” just make fun of him, not actually laughing with him. They bully him on the outside, as external, not just with words, they have inhumanly pushed and tripped poor feeble-minded Charlie as well, and they laugh right at him, spurring out rude names at him. To add on, as stated in the text, the author illustrates this point when he states, “The first I knew of it was when Mr. Donnegan showed me the petition. Eight hundred and forty names, everyone connected with the factory, except Fanny Garden. Scanning the list quickly, I saw at once hers was the only missing name. All the rest demanded that I be fired (296).” This demonstrates an external conflict because of his sudden change and growth in IQ, workers alongside Charlie, could not distinguish what to think of him, they seemed so uncomfortable and displeased now that Charlie suddenly grew in intelligence, that the workers in the factory signed a petition and got Charlie fired from his job, his one source of income. The external conflict is a way that change contributes and commits to a problem because it affects Charlie physically, because of his changes, which involves in his spike in mental state.

Ultimately, change can contribute and lead to both internal and external conflicts. According to the author, “I told her I didn’t want to be smart any more. That’s not true. I still love her and I still want to be smart but I had to say that so she’d go away. She gave Mrs Flynn money

to pay the rent. I don't want that. I got to get a job. Please... please let me not forget how to read and write...(305).” This quote shows an internal and external conflict because, as Charlie drastically begins to lose his memory and everything he learned, he begins to shut himself out with the rest of the world and refuses to speak with anybody, which results in Ms. Kinnian having to physically pay for Charlie's rent, but Charlie doesn't want that, as he wants to pay for himself and get a job. Another point in this topic is demonstrated in the text, “I keep telling myself I must keep writing these reports so that somebody will know what is happening to me. But it gets even harder to form the words and remember spellings. I have to look up even simple words in the dictionary now and it makes me impatient with myself. Dr Strauss comes around almost every day, but I told him I won't see or speak to anybody. He feels guilty. They all do. But I don't blame anyone. I knew what might happen. But how it hurts (303).” This quote represents an internal and external conflict because of his mentally ill intelligence has gotten worse as an after effect the operation, he now can't write and needs to look words up physically on a dictionary. He also shut himself out with the physical world and other people because of his poor mental state, commenting that his mental state “hurts”. Charlie Gordon has to go through internal and external conflicts because of his changes that he went through because of his surgery and learning, and as well when it all flushes down the drain and becomes forgotten, forgetting everyone he knew and everything he did. He had to both physically and mentally suffer from the pain of the surgery.

To top it off, change contributes to problems and conflicts, internally, externally, and both. This is important to view what problems Charlie goes through inside and outside because of his changes throughout the story. It is necessary to extract themes from literary works because

it can teach people lessons that they can learn from and prevent in real life as it is described in a fictional story. This theme can instruct people that somebody could be going through vigorous times in life, through many transformations, if it's in their family or in their body, they can be really insecure and have problems, conflicts in the inside as well as the outside. Charlie Gordon goes through many changes in his life, and experiences many conflicts as a result. Change can make people think differently, causing difficulties in getting used to and adapting to the new idea. Changing how one may think, may change reality as they refuse to accept, can't get along, which the aftereffect is problematic, mentally, and or physically. Many people experience times of hardships as their life evolves, develops, and changes through their life span, and developing into a perfectly written story.