

Being Persistent

Throughout the world, millions of people with mental disabilities are teased and sometimes called berserk and simple minded. A short story written by Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon" written in 1959, shows how Charlie Gordon overcomes the obstacles faced on his road to intelligence. Charlie is a 32-year-old man with mental disorders who had the chance to get surgical procedures that would triple his I.Q. Being persistence can lead to many contributions. Charlie is very persistence even though many people bully him, become frightened of him, and not believe in him.

To begin with, Charlie always eager to learn, never understood everything he was taught. Constantly, he tried his best and worked hard to achieve his goal. Charlie was told that Miss Kinnian (Charlie's teacher) recommended him to Dr. Strauss because he is the best student at her night school class (286). Miss Kinnian wants the best for Charlie so she recommended him to the scientists/doctors. Being told that you are the best in a class you put so much effort into, by a teacher, is very satisfying. Charlie was not always referred to as a great learner but instead as a dope/stupid person. A co-worker, Joe Carp, teased, "... hey look where Charlie had his operashun what did they do Charlie put some brains in"(289). Charlie's coworkers would think of him as brainless. Charlie always laughed along with them not knowing he was the joke. Though Charlie stayed persistent, even though (at the moment) he did not know he was being bullied.

In addition, people were becoming afraid of Charlie when he started showing signs of his sudden knowledge. Everybody was surprised how smart he had become. Charlie's landlady, Ms. Flynn, had stared at him awfully funny lately as if she were frightened of him (293). Shocked was his landlady hearing his rightful sentences. For instance, other people write grammarly correct but do not do so as well when speaking. Charlie soon begins to notice this and gets worried. On one of his Progress reports

he wrote, “Everybody seems to be frightened of me. When I went over to Amos Borg and tapped him on the shoulder, he jumped up in the air”(295). People might feel bad because they probably did something bad to Charlie like tease him or something. Now they might think that he found out what they did to him and that’s why they’re afraid when they see him. Charlie felt weird and lonely, but that did not stop him from wanting to be more intelligent than he already was.

Furthermore, Charlie gained enough knowledge to examine what might happen after the surgery or if it’s even permanent. People would tell him that he does way too much on his study. For example, Charlie wrote, “Dr. Strauss thinks I’m working too hard. Dr. Nemur says I’m trying to cram a lifetime of research and thought into a few weeks”(301). These statements were made by the two scientists that performed the surgery on Charlie. They both did not believe Charlie was able to answer his questions because it takes years and he might not have those years. Trying to get Charlie’s hopes up, though not believing in him, he said that “... an experimental failure or the disproving of a theory was as important to the advancement of learning as a success would be”(301). Charlie knew what Dr. Strauss meant. Even though he had people disbelieve in him, Charlie actually answered his questions by digesting Algernon (a mouse with the same surgery as Charlie). Charlie even wrote “Algernon-Gordon Effect” that disproved the theory that Einstein had made(302). Charlie finally understood that his intelligence wouldn’t last long and that he’ll either end up like Algernon, who died, or the same way he was before the surgery. Though, Charlie was not believed in and aware of his intelligence coming to an end, he stayed persistent.

In conclusion, Charlie always persistent after being bullied, Being afraid of, and not believed in, led to contributions. What was remarkable was that Charlie with mental disorder, was able to become

smart after surgery and make a discovery for science. Gordon finally got what he wanted but sadly he knew it was only temporarily.