

Brennen
Morejohn
Period 6

Ordinary People essay.

The novel Ordinary People is a story of a family going through a hardship of being a dysfunctional family. The story focuses in on Calvin and Conrad who are the father and son and also the main characters of the story. The story switches off with the two different characters through out the book so you can get inside each characters mind to better understand each persons perspective.

Conrad starts the book off and has just came back from a mental hospital for trying to kill himself with by cutting his wrists. In the book you discover that he holds in his anger and emotions to mask he true feeling. At first in the story you can see how he bottles up his emotions and almost breaks down until he comes to senses with himself and his father. "When you let yourself feel, all you feel is lousy."

Conrad blames himself for the death of his brother Buck. "Did I abandon them, or did they abandon me?" Conrad thinks of this when he remembers when the boat tipped over in the storm. He goes to a psychiatrist who needles at him until one day when Conrad gets angry and upset and has an imaginary fight with his dead brother which gets the load off his chest. 'The hell! You never get tired, not before me, you don't! You tell me not to get tired, you tell me to hang on, and then you let go!' 'I couldn't help it. Well, screw you, then!'"

Calvin, Conrad's father, has always lead himself to think that after Conrad came back from the hospital that " Everything is alright." Calvin also had a drinking problem "because drinking helps..., deadening the pain". Calvin used alcohol to hide his

problems because he was afraid they were their . He questions himself as if he's a good father or not. The more he starts to realize the conflicts around him, he also realize what his marriage is. He sees Beth's true side

Beth, is the mother of Conrad and Cal's wife. Beth has a super-ego and is always to busy trying to be the role-model women. She has over self control and denies emotions invested in people. "She had not cried at the funeral.... She and Conrad had been strong and calm throughout." She has to be a perfectionist and worked herself up beyond common sense so she can be a winner in her social life. "Everything had to be perfect, never mind the impossible hardship it worked on her, on them all."

I myself have had similar experiences that related to those in the story of Ordinary People. I can understand how how Conrad and Calvin would feel given their situation because I just had a best friend come back from a mental hospital for saying he was going to kill himself. Going through a mental institution has changed the atmosphere inside his house, and the relationship with his family. When something serious such as killing yourself happens to someone close, it can really open your eyes to what might be going on in their minds and help you understand them more.