

The Curious Empathy Board

Five Quotes from the Novel

- 1) "And then Mother made me take my clothes off and get into the bath and she said I could use her towel, which was purple with green flowers on the end. And she gave Toby water and some bran flakes..." (p. 192)

I chose this quote because I believe that it shows how empathic Christopher's mother was towards him when he arrived at her house. She couldn't understand how long and difficult of a journey it could've been. She felt that if she were in his shoes, she'd feel dirty and want to take a bath so she drew Christopher a bath. She also fed Toby because she understood how important he was to Christopher since he took him on such a journey. Christopher's mother hadn't seen him in a very long time, but still wanted to help him out during a time like this.

- 2) "Oh, Christopher, I am so, so sorry. I never realized."
"Oh dear, dear, dear." (p. 58)

This quote displays Mrs. Alexander's empathy toward Christopher when he told her that his mother died. She felt genuinely sorry for him, and it was upsetting for her to believe that such a young boy could lose his mother so suddenly due to a heart attack.

- 3) "I'm sorry, Christopher. I wish I could answer all these questions but I simply don't know." (p. 53)

This quote shows Siobhan's empathy toward Christopher. Christopher had many questions about what happened between Mr. Shears and his father and Siobhan could tell that these questions were important for Christopher to know the answer to. She certainly wanted to help him and answer his questions but she couldn't and this made her feel for Christopher.

- 4) "You don't have to say anything, not right now. You just have to think about it. And, um... I've got you a present. To show you that I really mean what I say. And to say sorry." (p. 219)

This quote demonstrates empathy showed by Christopher's father. He understands that right now is a difficult time for Christopher since he won't talk to him. He knows that if he were in Christopher's shoes he'd be angry, too so he got Christopher a present.

- 5) "Oh, Christopher, I'm so sorry."
"Christopher, let me hold your hand. Just for once. Just for me. Will you? I won't hold it hard." (p. 193-194)

Christopher's mother finds out that Christopher's father told him that she was dead and that he never gave him the letters that she wrote for him. Christopher's mother feels very sorry for him and what he must have went through, believing that his mother died. Since she's empathetic, she tries to hold his hand to make him feel better, even though she knows that Christopher doesn't like to be touched.



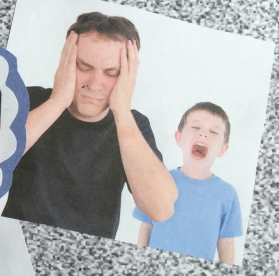
3



patience.

5

2



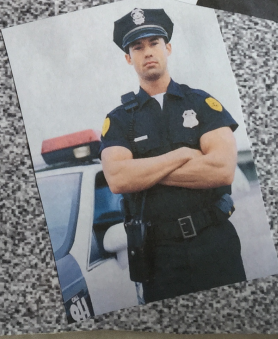
I Love you...



7



it's not the same without you around.



Macie Narbonne

Do you think you learned about your capacity for empathy through your exploration of Christopher's life? How?

I think I did learn about my capacity for empathy through my exploration of Christopher's life. Since I was reading the book through Christopher's eyes, I now have a better understanding of what it is like to be living with Asperger's. Christopher can't read emotions, doesn't like being touched and thinks very logically and not emotionally. I explored Christopher's difficulties of interacting in everyday life situations. It is very challenging for him to do things that are simple for us. Now that I have read about Christopher's struggles and differences, I feel that I can empathize more easily and be less judgmental. I have experienced what people with disabilities go through in the form of a story. I have read about many experiences of Christopher's and because of this, I believe I can empathize on a greater level with people like him through my greater understanding.

Explanation of Visual Component

I separated my empathy board into two parts relating to Christopher and empathy towards him. In the middle, there is an image of a few people. One of them is standing out and he is clearly different. This person symbolizes Christopher. Around him are different characters and how empathic they are to him. On the left side, the board displays the characters that did feel empathy toward Christopher. There are also a few numbers since Christopher is very interested in math. On the right side, the board displays the characters that did not feel empathy toward Christopher during the story. The background is gray and fuzzy, just like Christopher's brain when he gets overwhelmed and confused. The mom and the son symbolize Christopher and his mother. Christopher's mother misses him very much and feels extremely empathetic toward him when he arrives at her house since he was saying how much he hates his father. Christopher's mother wants the best for her son and tries to make him feel as at home as possible. The teacher and student illustrate Siobhan and Christopher. She always helps Christopher with everything, including writing his book. She is also very patient with him, which is why I put the word "Patience" on my board. Siobhan is empathic towards children with special needs, and this is why she is what she is and likes to work with Christopher. The picture of the old lady and boy symbolize Christopher and Mrs. Alexander. Christopher slowly starts to feel more comfortable with her during the story, and starts "chatting" with her. Mrs. Alexander tells Christopher that his mother had an affair with Mr. Shears and that his father didn't tell him the whole story. The detective picture illustrates how Mrs. Alexander helped him with his detective work. She feels empathetic toward Christopher when she finds out that he didn't know these things. She also feels empathetic toward him when he tells her that his mother died. All three of these characters accept Christopher's differences and love him for who he is. They are nonjudgmental. The picture of the stressed father and crying son represent Christopher and his father's relationship before he ran away. While Christopher is trying his hardest to do his detective work and find out who killed Wellington, his father is very intolerant. He throws away Christopher's book and doesn't care what the investigation means to him. He also makes Christopher promise that he will stop investigating since he knows it's hard for Christopher to break a promise. Christopher's father is not empathetic. Though, by the end of the story, Christopher's father misses him very much and realizes that it's not the same without him around. Lastly, Mrs. Shears and the policeman at the beginning of the story do not show empathy toward Christopher. When Christopher is hugging Wellington, Mrs. Shears assumes that he killed the dog. She is angry with him for hugging Wellington and she doesn't feel empathetic that maybe he liked the dog. The policeman also isn't empathetic toward Christopher as he keeps asking rapid questions about the dog and doesn't seem to care why Christopher is pressing his head against the ground and groaning. He just wants answers. My empathy board represents many character's relationships with Christopher.