How Does Childhood Experience Effect People?

Have you ever thought about changing childhood memories? Or wish that you could have a better living environment? In the short story *Long, Long, After School* by Ernest Buckler, who describes an African American guy named Wes Holman. He goes through a series of personal changes that make him better. The story is in a small town where people are still racist by that time, they do not use the same criterion to one who is different from them. However, Ms. Tretheway shows her kindness to Wes. Another short story *A Teacher’s Rewards* by Robert Phillips is telling about the protagonist, Raybe Simpson has being bullied by his teacher in school. The teacher, Ms. Scofield has a bias in people’s social class, which Raybe is from a poor family. Both stories mention one’s childhood is important for developing who they become as an adult. Wes and Raybe’s childhood experiences affected their behaviour, personality, and identity as they grew.

Wes and Raybe’s childhood represents that previous experiences and treatments from others will affect their personal growth. In *Long, Long After School*, Ms. Tretheway’s responsibility as a teacher has had a positive impact on her students’ development. When other students are saying how “dirty” Wes is, she puts herself in between to protect Wes. There is once Wes is almost bleeding to death, Ms. Tretheway saves his life, “(…) Mine’s [Raybe] that odd type─A negative, isn’t it? Miss Tretheway’s was A negative, too (…). She gave me a whole quart, just as soon as she found out that hers would match.” (Buckler, Pg. 52). Thanks to her gentleness and love make Wes can stay beyond others' judgment about him, he describes her as a “beautiful” old lady with a wonderful heart. Also, he can make fun of himself now, “‘you’re making me blush.’ And do you know, that was the first time I’d ever been able to say that, and laugh, myself.” (Buckler, Pg. 52). Unfortunately, in *A Teacher’s Rewards*, Raybe is not as lucky as Wes. His teacher Ms. Scofield believes that he is the one who does not follow the rules, unlike Nathan Pillsbury who comes from a wealthy family. Raybe is raised by his aunt, she is not rich enough to afford nice and clean clothes for Raybe, but she has done anything she can do for him. Yet, Ms. Scofield judges people from their appearance; because of that, she considers Raybe as a “bad kid”. It comes out from Raybe's own words: “you always told me I was dirty. Just because my aunt couldn’t keep me in clean shirts like some of the others. You punished me for everything that happened.” (Phillips, Pg.386-387). It forms his actions and attitudes to become the way his teacher thinks he is or worse, “You were no good to start with. No motivation. No follow-through. I knew just where you’d end up. You’ve run true to form.” (Phillips, Pg. 385). Although both Wes and Raybe have faced unjust experiments, their different reactions are leading them to various results.

The social standing and economic status of Raybe led to his current behaviour. Based on the previous paragraph says, now Raybe has changed into a person who does not follow rules and lows. Moreover, he can only make friends like him and indulges himself in breaking the law. One of the reasons is because Ms. Scofield does not give him a chance to know what he does wrong or explain that it is not his fault, and it hurts Raybe’s inners, “you picked on me all the time. Made me out worse than I was. You never gave me the chance the others had. The other kids left me out of things because you were always saying I was bad.” (Phillips, Pg. 386). Moreover, it distorts the right values and now he thinks revenge is the only way to take back the right after staying in prison for ten years and thinking about what brings him to jail. He remembers how Ms. Scofield raps his knuckles, now he is going to “set the goal”, “[Raybe] wrenching her quivering hands and forcing them to the tabletop. Then with his free hand he raised the hammer. For one, he finished something.” (Phillips, Pg. 387). That is the revenge for the pain and suffering from his childhood, it makes him cruel and violent.

The ill-treatment of a person might lead to problems in their behaviour; however, the opposite situation can be seen when they are treated well. Although not everyone accepts his accomplishments, Wes works hard to let others acknowledge him and to join the part of the community. He decides to get stronger and study harder than anyone. Thus, he gets the payback, “they voted me the best all-around student in High school?” (Buckler, Pg. 51). Wes is so happy that he can believe in anything, the joy has floated into his heart. Furthermore, Wes’s story with Ms. Tretheway has influenced the narrator as well, the narrator no longer sees him as an African American who does not matter. Instead, he sees him as a lovely human being with full emotions, “I thought about a boy the colour of whose skin was such that he could never blush (…) I thought about the corsage. My curiosity was quite satisfied. But somehow I had never felt less beautiful, or less of a gentleman.” (Buckler, Pg. 52). Wes not only gets the love from his teacher, Ms.tretheway but also grows with it and shares the spirit to others. He lets his childhood experience become a source of his personal growth.

Ultimately, the impact of one’s childhood can be related as they grew. From Wes and Raybe’s stories show that childhood experiences will affect their behaviour, personality, and identity to who they become as an adult. In *A Teacher’s Rewards*, due to Raybe’s previous experiences, his current values are askew. On the contrary, Wes in I *Long, Long After School* has made his previous experience as the sources of his personal growth. As he endures the bullying, people slowly start to get a different impression of him: people can see his kindness and gentle. Therefore, having a positive childhood experience has a high affection on one’s personality and appearance.