



Welcome to Berner's Family Book Talk

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#7thmostimpthing



Rationale: Social Emotional Learning

“If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.” – Daniel Goleman

“Social emotional learning offers educators, families, and communities relevant strategies and practices to better prepare students for the tests of life, not a life of tests.” – M.J. Elias

“Shelley Pearsall tells a powerful story about discovering what shines within us all, even when life seems full of darkness.”

Scenario:

In a rage of grief, 13-year-old Arthur Owens throws a brick at James Hampton, the neighborhood “Junk Man,” and injures him. Arthur looks like he’s bound straight for juvie — until Mr. Hampton comes up with an alternative punishment. Arthur is sentenced to become a “junk man” himself, collecting seven indispensable items from local trash bins for a project Mr. Hampton has in mind. Arthur’s work for Mr. Hampton, along with the friendships he forms along the way, help heal Arthur’s pain and give him a new sense of purpose and hope.



Book Trailer

After watching the trailer highlighting themes and quotes from *The Seventh Most Important Thing*, please discuss the following two prompts with your table:

- Share your “readings” of the video with your table.
What is the strongest image/quote in the video? Why?
- What can we do as a school community to promote a positive environment for all students?

Character Impact

What other characters besides Mr. Hampton make a difference in Arthur's life? How?

Give two pieces of evidence from the novel to support your choice.

Mrs. Owens

Barbara

Officer Billie

Groovy Jim

Squeak

Dynamic Characters

Arthur thinks Mr. Hampton is the reason he helps Squeak, something the “old” Arthur wouldn’t have done.

Do you agree that Arthur changes throughout the story because of Mr. Hampton? How so?

Life Lessons

- James Hampton took broken things in Guam after his first vision to create something beautiful from them.
How is this a bigger life lesson?
- “*Where there is no vision, the people perish*” is Mr. Hampton’s favorite Bible verse and he shares it with everyone.
What do you think it means?

Share with your table...



Wings

On page 189, Mr. Hampton explains, “No two wings are the same. Every pattern is different. Colors and iridescence are different. Some angels are like peacocks. Others are less flashy. Like city pigeons.”

Redemption

1. The act of being rescued or set free
2. The act of being saved from consequences
3. The payment of an obligation
4. Salvation from sin

- Which definition connects to Arthur Owens' experiences?
- Is redemption possible?

Share with your table...

Changing Family Relationships

How often do you express your love and appreciation for your family members? Are you open to each other? Does it happen enough? Do they know that you care for them?

How has reading *The Seventh Most Important Thing* changed your relationship with your family members?

Explain...

**“‘Tis the good reader that makes
a good book” - Emerson**

Novels like *The Seventh Most Important Thing* can certainly inspire our emotions to flow. What part of the novel made you:

Cry

Laugh

Get Angry

Share with your table...