

The Keys to Powerful and Direct Messaging

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“Happiness exists where I can get it. In these notebooks where worlds of memories greet me, almost like a childhood friend who moved away for years and finally came back home”

-Adam Silvera (Aaron)

When a reader finds a source of inspiration like the quote above, it can create a bond between the reader and the text. Sources of inspiration are rare; text is an example of how a powerful message can encourage deeper thought in the reader. People that have lived through a troubled home life may turn to books or movies that speak to them. Others that have struggled emotionally may turn to a book that relates more to their struggles and fears. It is up to writers to find the methods that speak to the readers they are trying to reach. Authors use relatable characters and environments to create a personal experience for the reader which can insight deeper thought.

The environments that authors choose to write about are extremely important. If the authors can emulate the correct environment and mood of the book it will grow a stronger connection between reader and text. *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi is an autobiography of a young girl who lived through the Iranian revolution and the following war between the two neighboring nations, Iraq and Iran. The book follows a younger Marjane as she watches her country turn from a somewhat healthy dictatorship to country of religious extremism. Throughout the story, Marjane is constantly reminded of her ruined childhood. From daily bombings to a police force that discriminates women at pleasure. Satrapi writes in the book, [“LIFE IS UNBEARABLE AND WE ARE ALL GOING TO DIE.”](#) This is just one example of the hopelessness and struggle Marjane is forced into dealing with. It forced her to lose the great years of childhood and replace them with a smart and strong adult. Readers that have been through a troubled childhood or traumatic experience as a child find a book like this extremely understandable and relatable. Using the environment of struggle and suffering as a young child Satrapi was able to speak very powerfully to the reader.

Stereotyping is a crucial element of any storytelling. Whether it is a stereotype to get a point across quickly and seamlessly, or to relate to the characters at a deeper, more personal level. Stereotyping is a powerful element of any character. *The Breakfast Club* is a 1980's film that shows a combination of light comedy coupled with powerful messaging that speaks to the viewer. *The Breakfast Club* follows 5 young teenagers all with very distinct stereotyped personalities as they serve their time in Saturday detention. John Bender, also known as the criminal of the group is an intense kid that brings down other to

bring peace to himself. Although the classic bully is really more than you think underneath. Bender speaks to this injustice in the movie by stating, “SCREWS FALL OUT ALL THE TIME, THE WORLD IS AN IMPERFECT PLACE.” Bender never has faith in the people and world around him and this leads him to be the person he is. By stereotyping Bender’s character to take on multiple personas, Bender can be relatable to vast numbers of people. Bender can be interpreted as many different personality types, a bully or a popular kid just to name a few. By casting a wider net of relatability the writer is able to make a connection with an extremely large number of people. The movie’s writer, John Hughes utilized clever character development to allow viewers to pick and choose the part of Bender that they choose to relate with.

The stories of each individual character are the most important part of any book. The stories of each character can be the most important element of any book. In the novel, *More Happy Than Not* by Adam Silvera tells the story of a young teenager living in the Bronx named Aaron. Throughout the story, Aaron discovers who he is and more importantly what he will do to change it. However, what really makes *More Happy* a powerful story are the secondary character’s stories. One of those important characters is Thomas, a young teen and a friend of Aaron's. As Thomas lives his life he runs away from who he is; choosing to be normal and ignore what he really is. “THIS IS HOW THOMAS LIVES HIS LIFE, ONE MISFIRED DREAM AFTER THE OTHER. THAT JOURNEY MAY STRETCH FOR A LIFETIME, BUT EVEN IF HE DOESN’T DISCOVER THAT SPARK UNTIL HE IS AN OLD MAN, THOMAS WILL DIE WITH WRINKLES HE EARNED AND A SMILE ON HIS FACE.” Thomas chooses to run away instead of

sticking around and discovering the important parts about himself. His tendency to quit and ignore is very important to his development as a character. Aaron takes a more direct approach at understanding who he is. He tries to change who he is instead of accepting it. He uses leteo to end his struggle but in the end, made things worse for himself

“HAPPINESS SHOULDN'T BE THIS HARD.” Aaron doesn't accept who is until it is too late and his fate is sealed. The two approaches of running away and trying to change who you are devices used by Silvera to build a connection between the reader and text. Readers will find these two stories particularly relatable because of the stories very personal level. Nearly everyone human has been through a crisis like the one Aaron went through or avoided one the way Thomas does. This connection between reader and author is a very important step when creating a relatable story.

Creating a message that the reader understands is difficult, but when authors use the correct methods to relate to the reader a message can be conveyed. Reading about someone else's struggles to understand your own is the most powerful way to relate to a reader. In *Persepolis*, Satrapi uses this to her advantage, creating an environment that people can understand. Likewise, in *The Breakfast Club* understanding struggles of Bender and cracking his outer shell can reach out to any person that can find a part of his character to relate to. Lastly, in *More Happy* Silvera uses the stories of each character to ensure the story is deep enough to reach readers at a very personal level. Strong and insightful characters and environments are used to help relate to readers at personal level leaving the reader with more clarity of who they are.