

# *GOOD WILL HUNTING*



## Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think Will Hunting's life would have been like if the therapy had not been successful?
2. The actors Matt Damon and Ben Affleck wrote the script for this movie. Are they trying to say that the highest and best achievement of a man is to "go see about a girl", to have an empathetic loving relationship with a woman?
3. Describe attachment disorder and how it starts.
4. If the adults that a child must rely upon don't take care of the child or if they beat the child and violate the child's boundaries, what message does that send to the child?
5. What is "affective attunement" and how does it relate to a child learning to manage primitive emotions?
6. What were some of the symptoms of attachment disorder from which Will Hunting suffered at the beginning of the film?
7. How was Will different at the end of the movie from the way he was at the beginning?
8. What does Sean McGuire, the therapist, try to do in the treatment?
9. What is the difference between the usual situation in which an individual seeks psychotherapy and the situation faced by Sean McGuire when Will Hunting was brought to him?
10. Sean asks Will to list the people he feels that he has real relationships with. What does Will answer, and how does this relate to attachment disorder?
11. There are parallel things happening in Will's relationship with the therapist and in his relationship with Skylar. What are they?
12. What did reading and mastering subjects mean for Will psychologically? Why didn't he use his gifts to find friends or in a competitive academic setting?
13. Why do people with attachment disorder have difficulty developing a conscience?
14. What was going on when Sean got angry at Will, held him up against the wall, and told Will that if he disrespected Sean's wife again Sean would beat him up?
15. Why couldn't Will, before his breakthrough, tell Skylar that he loved her?
16. Why did Will feel no sense of gratitude to Professor Lambeau and take such delight in hurting Lambeau's feelings?

17. How did the scene of the fight relate to Will's attachment disorder? Why does Will have to be pulled off the man who used to beat him up in kindergarten?
18. What did you think of Professor Lambeau? Discuss his positive and negative characteristics.
19. The disadvantages and bad luck that Will has in life are obvious. What are some of the advantages that he possesses or fortunate events which occur to him in the movie?
20. Was Professor Lambeau trying to manipulate Will or to help him?
21. What role does social class play in the movie? Which social classes are we talking about?
22. One person is a bridge between the two socio-economic classes shown in the film. Who is he?
23. Is discrimination against a person because of the socio-economic class they belong to any less destructive than racial discrimination?
24. Why is the character of Will Hunting portrayed as being brilliant? Even people who aren't particularly smart have attachment disorder.
25. Will Hunting was able to look at Sean's picture and describe Sean's character with enough accuracy to really upset Sean. Will was able to do this because of two reasons. One was because Will was so smart. What was the second one?
26. Is a child ever responsible for the abuse perpetrated upon him or her by an adult?
27. Describe the effects of the beatings and parental neglect suffered by Will.
28. What percentage of children who are sexually abused report the abuse?
29. Approximately how many girls will be subject to unconsented sexual contact by an adult? Approximately how many boys will suffer this fate?
30. Describe the mechanism by which child victims of abuse come to blame themselves for the abuse.
31. Why was it important for Sean to describe his relationship with his wife to Will?
32. When a child is physically abused by a parent, what are some of the internal scars that are left?
33. No one in this film is perfect. But who is the best male role model in this film? Why?
34. Did Will Hunting have a responsibility to himself or to society to develop his talent to solve math problems?
35. Often, characters who break away from their home cultures and explore new ways of relating to the world find resistance from their friends and family. How are the events of this movie different than that situation?
36. During most of the movie, what was keeping Will from entering the new (for him) intellectual/academic culture?