

Flowers For Algernon: Change

Many people believe that I.Q is used to measure how intelligent you are. However, it is used to measure so many more things like creativity and problem-solving skills. In “Flowers For Algernon”, a fictional short story, by Daniel Keyes, he specifically writes about a 37- year-old man named Charlie Gordon who has an I.Q of 68. He also writes that, Charlie is still able to make a drastic change over time thanks to a special intelligence growth operation. Many people were able to notice this. Charlie was the only one who does not. Change is something that can happen overtime to someone or something unexpectedly. We are able witness this idea flourish throughout the story, Flowers For Algernon: when the doctors made him take test, after the operation, and when he was starting to make intellectual progress.

In the beginning, change is noticeable on Charlie because at first, he is calm and gentle. Afterwards, he is angry and tense when he takes a maze test against a mouse named Algernon. Algernon is not like many mice since they experimented with the intelligence growth operation first on him. It specifically shows Charlie’s change in behavior and language in pg. 288, “ Nothing is happening. I had lots of tests and different kinds of races with Algernon. I hate that mouse. He always beats me.” Charlie got frustrated and soon his excitement for the operation process, completely changed. Going back to the page (288), “ These inkblots are stupid. And those pictures are stupid too.” This shows how he quickly changes his attitude. The reason being, is because he really wanted to be used as an experiment by the Doctors in the operation. So,

Charlie is in a lot of stress because he feels that they were not going to pick him. This was the first evident reason for how Charlie changed over time.

In addition, another reason how Charlie changed over time is after his intellectual growth operation. After he had his operation, he took Ms. Kinnian on a date and began talking to her about how he felt. He said (pg.296), “ I don’t feel smart. There are so many things I don’t understand.” In other words, Charlie’s optimism towards him becoming smarter has changed since he does not feel like he is making progress. Charlie did not know it, but he was always making progress and people realized this. Ms. Kinnian was one of those people who noticed Charlie’s intelligence growth. She said to him (pg.296), “ You’re already a better reader than I am. You can read a whole page at a glance while I can take in only a few lines at a time.” Ms. Kinnian was showing Charlie how much he has changed and the progress he is making after the operation. She, sort of, helped his confidence boost up. These examples show how Charlie has been changing over time.

To conclude, the last reason for how he has changed is because of the, soon noticeable, progress he is making. Many people think differently about all of Charlie’s new personality changes. People also think differently about his intellectual growth. Evidence can be found in pg. 297, “ You used to be a good, ordinary, dependable man--not too bright maybe, but honest. Who knows what you done to yourself to get so smart all of a sudden.” Fanny is saying here that Charlie has completely changed the type of person he was after he got more intelligent. She does not think it’s right for him to just have suddenly changed. From the statement Fanny made, his perspective of his intelligence and the operation, has changed. In paragraph 3 (pg.297) it states, “ This intelligence has driven a wedge between me and all people I once knew and loved.” Charlie

now changes the way he used to think about his newly developed intelligence. This proves the statement about how Charlie has changed.

To finish off, Change is something that no one knows when it is going to come, one day it just unexpectedly occurs. That is why this theme is important in Flowers For Algernon, because it shows how no one really realized how Charlie had been changing because of his surgery. One day to next, he just is not the same. This effects many of the characters, including Charlie, because no one acted the same around him anymore. Charlie's whole personality and his way of thinking just changes in the blink of an eye and you are able to see how he changed: when he takes the tests, after the operation, and when he is starting to make progress.