
The Role Of Character Traits In The Novel Indian Horse

Character traits are all aspects of an individual's behaviour that reflects their personality and how they handle circumstances in life. Mother Teresa is a concrete example of how her positive attributes helped her to handle life situations. She was a woman admired for her unselfishness, bravery, generosity and her hard work. Likewise, this is also the case with Saul. In the novel, *Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese, Saul's resilience, intelligence, and perseverance are the most important traits that he uses to help in his life.

Resilience is a necessary quality that can support one throughout their entire life. Saul shows resilience in many areas of his life. One example is when he loses his entire family and is placed in a residential school but can withstand all his misery to find a new identity while playing hockey. "When I hit the ice, I left all of that behind me. I stepped onto the ice and Saul Indian Horse, the abundant Ojibway kid, clutched in the frozen arms of his dead grandmother, ceased to exist." (Wagamese 83). Another instance is when after all that Saul is going through, he decides not to give up and let his past tear him down. He chooses to be brave and give back the love he has for the game. "So, I think what I want to do is coach kids. Native kids. I want to bring them the joy I found, the speed, the grace, the strength and the beauty of the game. I want to give that back." (Wagamese 212). The final example is when Saul decides to backtrack to understand the present. He could have easily given up and remained an addict, but he chooses to keep fighting and learn to live with his past. "The only thing I had known for certain was that I had to backtrack, to revisit vital places from my early life if I was ever going to understand how to live in the present." (Wagamese 207). Resilience is an important quality to have and that is how Saul uses resilience to help him throughout his life.

Intelligence is an attribute essential to support one throughout their life. Saul shows intelligence in many areas of his life. One example is when he first comes to St. Jerome's. He already knows English because his grandmother teaches him before he comes to the residential school. This helps him because he does not receive as many beatings as his peers receive. "I could speak and read English. Most of them had been pulled from the deep north and knew only Ojibway. Speaking a word in that language could get you beaten or banished to the box in the basement the older ones have come to call the Iron sister." (Wagamese 48). Another example is when Saul can see things in hockey that the other players cannot see. When he first watches the game, he can understand hockey almost immediately. He seems to be able to understand hockey without trying. This helps him in the future when he plays against many different teams. "I see it already" (Wagamese 58). Saul can grasp the idea of the game because he is a seer.