

Good Will Hunting

A Viewer's Reflection Guide

Note: This film is rated R and centers on adult themes of childhood abuse and trauma. This guide is written for older teens and adults.

Underneath the story of a janitor with a brilliant mind, *Good Will Hunting* is a film about being known. It shows that insight alone does not heal people; relationship does. The famous four words, it is not your fault, do not win an argument. They land in a place that argument cannot reach. Watch it, then use these prompts for personal reflection or a conversation with someone you trust.

For reflection

- Will protects himself with intelligence, humor, and distance. What are your own defenses, the ones that keep pain at arm's length, and what have they cost you?
- Many survivors conclude, as children, that they themselves are the problem. Where might an old and untrue belief about yourself still be quietly running the show?

For conversation

- Sean helps Will by being present, not by being clever. Who has been that steady, reliable presence for you? Have you been that for someone else?
- The film suggests the relationship is the treatment. What makes you feel safe enough to be truly honest with another person?

Try this

Say the true thing. Tell someone something real and unguarded, or simply let yourself be told something kind without deflecting it.

Consider support. If an old wound still aches, talking with a therapist is not weakness. It is the relationship doing its work.

About Dr. Michael Zakalik

A licensed clinical psychologist (Illinois and Washington, PSYPACT provider) with 20+ years helping children, parents, and families. He shares psychology-backed guides, tools, and stories for parents.

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