
To Kill A Mockingbird: The Novelties Of Courage

In the novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch was a widower of nearly fifty, who worked as a lawyer in Maycomb, Alabama. He had two children, Jem and Scout whom he treats as his equal with kindness and respect. Atticus is the moral backbone of the novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*. He is the voice of reason and he teaches his children, the value of empathy, integrity and courage. Through Atticus's moral guidance, his children are forced to question their own actions. He disciplines Jem and Scout with responsibility and effort. Atticus taught his children empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. One day Scout came home from school upset by what her teacher had told her. Atticus tried to explain to Scout that one "never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view-until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."(Lee, p. 36) Later as Scout stands on the Radley porch after having taken Boo home, she mentions how the street appears different, how from another angle the street was not viewed the same, perhaps from Boo's point of view. Atticus shows his children and community integrity. He believes in being honest and has high moral principles.

Miss Maudie said that "Atticus Finch is the same in his house as he is on the public streets." (Lee p. 53) Atticus showed his integrity to his children by the high standards he placed upon himself. He explained to Scout how unfair things could become, but that "sometimes we have to make the best of things, and the way we conduct ourselves when the chips are down-well...maybe you'll look back...that I didn't let you down."(Lee, p. 113) Atticus further explained how important it was for him to live with his own self, before he concerns himself with what others think of him. When asked to defend Tom Robinson, Atticus agrees. He believed in giving Tom the strongest defense, even though he probably knew he would not win. He accepted the responsibility to defend this black man, to the best of his ability. Atticus believed in justice for all, even when it came to Jem during the stabbing incident of Mr. Ewell. He accepted that his own son would not be given preferential treatment due to his class in society.

Atticus also taught his children courage. Jem was asked to read to Mrs. Dubose. It was a job that he did not enjoy, for she would insult Atticus among her other nasty comments. Atticus explained that she did in fact think differently than him, but that she was a woman of real courage. Mrs. Dubose was addicted to morphine and she wanted to die free. She decided to stop taking the morphine and suffered the terrible withdrawal from the drug. This was real courage, Atticus explained to Jem. "It's when you know your're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through not matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do. Mrs. Dubose won, all ninety-eight pounds of her."(Lee, p.121) Atticus was a Father who taught his children the value of empathy, integrity and courage. He treated his children as equals, and took the act of responsibility as a Father seriously. He wanted his children to grow into adults with a high sense of morals and justice. As Scout said walking home, in the last chapter, "I thought Jem and I would get grown but there wasn't much else left for us to learn, except possible algebra."(Lee, p.294)