Breaking Away

1. Why was Dave initially hesitant to go to college?

Dave was initially hesitant to go to college because his father never went to college and he turned out fine and the students who go to college are all affluent people who look down upon the working class people. Dave was afraid of being ostracized from the town because the working class people aren’t supposed to go to college. Dave also did not want to leave his friends behind and he saw his father who he sees is successful and how he didn’t go to college.

1. Dave considered himself a “Cutter” despite the fact that his father was a used car salesman and Dave had never worked in a quarry. How do these feeling relate to Dave’s age?

Dave considers himself a cutter because he like his father is working class and he wants to be like his father and not like the affluent students at college. Dave wants to fit into the role of a working class person who does not go to college because that is the social norm, the locals don’t go to college the affluent students do. This relates to people at Dave’s age because people after high school often have a difficult time deciding what to do with their future,

1. During the movie, Dave told his father that he was, “proud to be a Cutter”, and his father replied, “You’re not a Cutter.” Both of them were right and wrong, but in what ways?

The term Cutter literally is used for people who work in the quarry’s so in this sense Dave’s father is correct Dave does not work in the quarries so he is not a cutter. However the term cutter is used by people to mean those who are working class and do not go to college which means Dave is correct that he is in a sense a cutter.

1. How did Dave’s excessive pride in his Italian heritage affect his choices in the movie?

Dave uses his Italian culture throughout the film, his character is based heavily on his Italian culture. One of the reasons his father clashes with him is because of his pride for his Italian heritage while his father wants his family to be a stereotypical American. His Italian pride also makes him not want to go to college because the tradition is that he would go straight into the workplace. His Italian culture also teaches him to fit into a role, he is confident and charismatic because of his Italian heritage.

1. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Dave’s parents as they are portrayed in the movie.

Dave’s father is extremely tough on his son because Dave does not fit the role. He complains about how Dave cannot get a job but when he does get a job his father is very difficult on him. Though his father is difficult on him he does it for a reason he does not want his son to end up like a bum and wants him to be better than he is. Than eventually his father decides that he was wrong and he makes up with his son. At the end Dave’s father realizes his tactic of shaming his son isn’t working so he is nice to his son and encourages his son to go to college. His mother however unlike his father decides that she should not shame Dave in to going to college. Dave’s mother wants him to go into college however like his father at the end decides not to interfere with Dave’s decisions and to be nice to him.

1. Reflect on the theme of friendship as it is portrayed in the movie

Friendship is shown in multiple different lights in this film. Friendship is seen as a great idea in the movie when the friends hang out together and they have a good time around the town because they like each other. However friendship is also seen as a pressuring agent, Dave is pressured not to go to college because it would break up their friend group and those who go into college are viewed as snobby so “Cutters” should not go into college.

1. When the college students assault Cyril after he helped Dave serenade Kathy, why couldn’t Cyril and Dave tell their friends what they had been doing or that they had taken the college entrance examination? How does such actions enlighten us about their friendship?

Dave and Cyril cannot tell their friends about serenading Kathy or about entering the college exams because they would be ostracized. The friends are supposed to not go to college and to hang out with the towns folk, if they are seen not doing either of these then the friend won’t want to talk to them. This shows the reader that their friendship is built on social pressure, the friends are forced into certain roles and must satisfy certain stereotypes.

“How much input should parents and peers have on my destiny?”

Parents and peers should have limited input my choices as a person especially that of high school student. For multiple reasons a person’s destiny should be their own not that of another person. For starters other people may not have my best interests in mind they may seek personal gain over my gain. Other people are biased depending on their experiences they will recommend things that they have done not what is the best. Finally in the end it is my choice I am my own person only I can truly know what my best path is no one else can really know the route I want to take. A person’s destiny is very important and only they can know what the best path to take is, other people should not attempt to interfere with that.

People often are selfish and will attempt to attain personal gain for themselves rather than helping someone. Parents or peers may have underlying motives for suggesting career paths or post-secondary options. For example many parents suggest that students go into the medical field because there is a high salary there, parents say this so eventually their children will become rich and support them. Even though a high salary is a great thing many people do not like the medical field and have other passions and “Evidence suggests that doctors are approximately 1.87 times as likely to commit suicide than those working other occupations” (Top 11 Professions with Highest Suicide Rates, n.d.) due to the stress which many people cannot handle. Another example is in the movie Breaking Away Dave’s friend Mike pressures Dave not to go to college because Dave does not like people who go to college, he is putting his personal feelings above Dave’s best interests. People should follow their own destiny and not allow another person to force their belief onto them because that person may be pushing that for their own success.

Another significant factor in life decisions is bias, often time’s people will give advice that is biased because of their own personal experiences. Bias is in every person’s opinion and only someone who has not had the experience can truly have an unbiased opinion. Often time’s parents will tell their children to go to university because that is what they did and they feel successful so to be successful you need to go to university. However not all careers are best in university, some professions it is best to get an apprenticeship but parents push the narrative that you cannot be successful like me unless you go to university. Another example is in the movie Breaking Away Dave is told that he should not go into college because his friends tell him that only affluent, stuck up people go to college. Even though Dave should go to college so he can continue to bike and get a good career the pressure is still put on him not to by his friends because none of their families have ever gone to college. A reason that people should choose their own path with limited input from family and friends is because often these people are biased and their biased opinions may be wrong.

The best person to choose my destiny is myself, only I can know what I want and what is best for me. Parents and peers will try to tell people that they should do this or that however those people cannot understand us, only we can understand ourselves. In the movie Breaking Away every person tries to make a decision for Dave, his father wants him to go into college, his friends want him to just stay with them, however it is his mother who understands that it is Dave’s choice not any one else’s. Only Dave can know what he really wants and in the end he decides that going to college is the best thing for him and he made that choice not his father or his friends. This scenario is very similar to many student’s experiences, many students have their parents choose their career path and post-secondary opportunity however this often does not end well for the student, it is not their passion. Friends and family will try to push their view on to people however it is not their choice it is always in a person’s best interest to choose for themselves.

Only I should make my life’s decision, other people should have a very limited input and only give advice not attempt to change how a person feels. People can give their advice to others however this often results in them forcing their beliefs onto others which is bad for so many reasons. For example some people are toxic people who only attempt to achieve something for themselves when giving opinions rather than helping another. All opinions are backed by some sort of bias so the only unbiased opinion is that of one’s self, other people’s opinions will have biases that may negatively affect one’s choices. I am the only person who can understand my feelings and abilities only I can assess what life decision is right for me, other people cannot experience what I feel so the best option is for me to choose. Finally considering all of these arguments the best option is for my parents and peers to give limited advice to me and let me choose my own path that is best suited for me.

**References**

*Top 11 Professions with Highest Suicide Rates*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Mental Health Daily: http://mentalhealthdaily.com/2015/01/06/top-11-professions-with-highest-suicide-rates/