



**“Everybody just pretend to be normal, okay??!”**

**What:** Synopsis and characters' presentation

“Father **Richard** (Greg Kinnear) is desperately trying to sell his motivational success program... with no success. Meanwhile, "pro-honesty" mom **Sheryl** (Toni Collette) lends support to her eccentric family, including her depressed brother **Frank** (Steve Carell), fresh out of the hospital after being **jilted**<sup>1</sup> by his lover. Then there are the younger Hoovers - the seven-year-old, would-be beauty queen **Olive** (Abigail Breslin) and **Dwayne** (Paul Dano), a Nietzsche-reading teen who has taken a vow of silence. **Topping off**<sup>2</sup> the family is the **foul-mouthed**<sup>3</sup> grandfather (Alan Arkin), whose outrageous behavior recently got him evicted from his retirement home. When Olive is invited to compete in the "Little Miss Sunshine" pageant in far-off California, the family **piles into**<sup>4</sup> their **rusted-out**<sup>5</sup> VW bus to rally behind her - with **riotously**<sup>6</sup> funny results.”

**Who:** A family on the verge of a break-down.

**Why:** Every member of the family is experiencing a personal issue concerning:

- |                               |                            |                           |                   |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <i>future achievements</i> | 2. <i>job satisfaction</i> | 3. <i>sexuality</i>       | 4. <i>sex</i>     |
| 5. <i>dreams</i>              | 6. <i>family relations</i> | 7. <i>Self-confidence</i> | 8. <i>failure</i> |

**Review:** “Every once in a while, an independent movie becomes a **blockbuster**(=success). Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris’ **quirky** (=bizarre) tale brilliantly mixes family dysfunction with bright-eyed wonder. What’s more, Michael Arndt’s screenplay manages to balance genuine innocence with Tumblr-ready trivia that, no matter how cliché they are, hit you right in the sweet spot. The most important lesson is: there’s never a bad time to be reminded to “do what you love and fuck the rest.”

GOD BLESS THE GLOSSARY ☺

<sup>1</sup>to finish a romantic relationship with someone suddenly and unkindly (=essere mollato, piantato)

<sup>2</sup> to make something complete or satisfying (= a completare il tutto)

<sup>3</sup> using obscene language (= sboccato)

<sup>4</sup> crowd inside a vehicle: (= ammucciarsi)

<sup>5</sup> a reddish-brown colour that looks like rust (=arrugginito)

<sup>6</sup> very loud and uncontrolled, and full of energy (=sfrenatamente)



### LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE TRIVIA

(follow the movie while completing the worksheet)

**1. What is the name of Richard's self-motivation program?**

- a. Strive for Life
- b. Never give up
- c. Reach for the star
- d. Refuse to lose

**2. How many steps does Richard's program consist of?**

- a. 12 steps
- b. 7 steps
- c. 9 steps
- d. 8 steps

**3. Who is Dwayne's idol?**

- a. Proust
- b. Nietzsche
- c. Freud

**4. What is not one of the things Dwaine writes on his notepad?**

- a. Don't kill yourself tonight
- b. Where is Olive?
- c. Welcome to hell
- d. Egg white omelette

**5. What is grandpa's addiction?**

- a. Alcohol
- b. Sex
- c. Coffee
- d. Heroin

**6. Sheryl's brother, Frank, comes to live with the Hoovers after being in hospital. Why has he been hospitalized?**

- a. He overdosed on heroin
- b. He had shot himself in the foot
- c. He had a heart attack
- d. He slit his wrists.

**7. Why are Olive's parents arguing in the motel?**

- a. because the van doesn't work properly.
- b. because they are tired
- c. because Richard has lost a good job opportunity
- d. because they don't have enough money for the journey.

**8. What does the police officer find in the trunk of the Hoover family van?**

- a. Grandpa's dead body
- b. magazines
- c. cigars
- d. a sheet

**9. Why can't Dwayne fly jets in the Air Force?**

- a. He is blind
- b. He is diabetic
- c. He is deaf
- d. He is colour blind

**10. What kind of car does Sheryl drive?**

- a. VW Bus
- b. VW Jetta
- c. Nissan Trade
- d. Citroen Berlingo

**11. Who does Frank's student fall in love with?**

- a. Stan Grossman
- b. Frank
- c. Prof. Sugarman
- d. Frank's teaching assistant

**12. When Grandpa and Olive are in the hotel room, what are they practicing?**

- a. yodelling (=singing effect = GORGEGGIARE)
- b. dance steps
- c. roaring and growling
- d. singing

**13. What is the song Olive has chosen for her show?**

- a. YMCA
- b. Super Freak.
- c. It's Raining Men
- d. I Feel Good



**THE FILM CLUB**  
by **BABYLON LINGUE STRANIERE**

**IT'S TIME TO DEBATE!**

**Question n. 1.** They all have personal dreams. What is each person's dream?

**Question n. 2.** Is 'Little Miss Sunshine' a film about losers? Why/why not?

**Question n. 3.** Who is your favourite character? Why?

**Question n. 4.** a) Are there any differences in how Olive's parents treat her? (*Examples are when the father tells Olive about uncle Frank's suicide attempt or when he says that ice cream makes you fat*).

b) What should parents tell their children?

c) What should parents not talk about?

**Question n. 5.** Match the following explanations with their quotes.

**A.** Once you accept the unpredictability of life, set goals to "do what you love" and embrace the curveballs that will be thrown your way. And when all else fails, act like no one's watching and be yourself.

**B.** If the urge to scream overcomes you, give into it. If the urge to cry overcomes you, give into it. All of us experience a moment when we choose not to repress our feelings. It pays-off- no matter if what they're releasing is positive or negative.

**C.** No family gets along perfectly well. There are differences of opinion, power plays and egos to deal with, but all of those work in tandem to create a team.

**D.** It always happens: there are moments in life when we reach the pivotal fork in the road where we can either fight or fly. We have to realize that our troubles shape our personality more than our triumphs. Sometimes it's a bitter pill to swallow, but one whose benefits far outweigh the momentary feelings of anguish.



**Question n. 6.** Choose your favourite quote and provide a reason for your choice.

1. **Dwayne:** *You know what? Fuck beauty contests. Life is one fucking beauty contest after another. School, then college, then work... Fuck that. And fuck the Air Force Academy. If I want to fly, I'll find a way to fly. You do what you love, and fuck the rest.*

2. **Grandpa:** *A real loser is someone who's so afraid of not winning he doesn't even try.*

3. **Richard:** *Sarcasm is the refuge of losers.*

**Frank:** [sarcastically] *It is? Really?*

**Richard:** *Sarcasm is losers trying to bring winners down to their level.*

**Frank:** [sarcastically] *Wow, Richard, you've really opened my eyes to what a loser I am. How much do I owe you for those pearls of wisdom?*

**Richard:** *Oh, that ones on the house. (=lo offre la casa)*

4. **Olive:** *Grandpa, am I pretty?*

**Grandpa:** *Olive, you are the most beautiful girl in the whole world.*

**Olive:** *You're just saying that.*

**Grandpa:** *No! I'm madly in love with you and it's not because of your brains or your personality. It's because you're beautiful, inside and out.*

**THE FILM CLUB**  
by **BABYLON LINGUE STRANIERE**



**LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE TRIVIA (follow the movie while completing the worksheet) KEYS FOR TEACHER**

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