Aphasia Book Club

Flowers for Algernon

Week 7: pages 145-196

Worksheet A

**1.** While Charlie is at the convention, he realizes Dr. Nemur and Professor Strauss are not geniuses (page 151-153). They don’t even know about the current research in their own field. Do you think Dr. Nemur and Professor Strauss are frauds? Or, as Burt says, they are just ordinary people trying to do their jobs?

Even though Charlie realizes he is smarter than every person at the convention, he still doesn’t think he is a genius. Instead, he calls himself “exceptional.” Why doesn’t Charlie think of himself as a genius?

How do you feel about labels that attempt to describe someone’s intelligence?

**2.** On page 162, Charlie realizes Dr. Nemur had made a mistake. The researchers had not waited long enough to make sure the experiment made permanent changes. Why does the waiting period need to be longer in Charlie’s case?

Do you think this “mistake” is going to cause problems for Charlie? If so, how?

**3.** On page 188, Charlie is about to leave his father’s barbershop and thinks to himself, “I wasn’t his son. That was another Charlie.” Why do you think Matt was unable to recognize Charlie?

Charlie thinks that if he revealed himself to Matt, Matt would resent Charlie like the people at the bakery did. How do you think Matt would have reacted if Charlie told him who he was?

Do you think Charlie should have told Matt who he was?

**4.** Charlie is building a complicated maze for Algernon (page 188-189). He notices that Algernon will practice the maze without any reward of food or water. But, Algernon will sometimes “throw himself against the walls of the maze, or curl up and refuse to work at all.” Why do you think Algernon is doing this?

Like Algernon, has Charlie ever acted erratically since the experiment?

What do you think could help Algernon stop these behaviors? Do you think it is good that Fay got a friend for Algernon?