

The Sixth Sense

(Drama) (1999)

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Major Characters

Cole Sear.....Haley Joel Osment

A sweet and intelligent but emotionally troubled 9 year old boy, who is convinced that the ghosts of dead people are always trying to communicate with him.

Malcolm Crowe.....Bruce Willis

A very sensitive and accomplished child psychologist, who tries to help Cole deal with his problems, while also trying to save his marriage.

Anna Crowe.....Olivia Williams

Malcolm's wife, a seller of fine jewelry, who seems to be growing away from him.

Lynne Sear.....Toni Collette

Cole's loving mother, who becomes more and more concerned about his emotional and physical problems.

Plot Summary

This is the story of an intelligent and gentle 9 year old boy who lives in Philadelphia, and who happens to see ghosts. One day he tells his psychologist that "I see dead people. They want me to do things for them." He seems to be telling the truth. It is also the story of that psychologist, Dr. Malcolm Crowe, a highly intelligent and accomplished professional who agrees to try and help Cole, just a few months after being shot in the stomach by one his former patients! Ever since that tragic incident, Malcolm and his wife seemed to be growing apart, and thus Malcolm must work with Cole while trying to repair his own personal life.

Over time, Malcolm learns of Cole's apparent ability to communicate with the dead, but seems unsure of how to help the child. In the meantime, Cole's mother becomes more frustrated and scared, especially when some of his classmates seem to be physically abusing him. However, Cole himself remains strong, and in the end, it seems that he will learn to help Malcolm as much as Malcolm helps him.

A general note: This film was nominated for several Academy Awards, and while the pace of the story telling is sometimes a bit slow, it is a well done movie with a truly interesting ending.

Some Words and Expressions that You may not Know

*A dangerous and emotionally disturbed former patient
breaks into the home of Dr. Malcolm Crowe and his wife.*

That is one fine frame.

“Fine” is a useful adjective meaning excellent. A “frame” is the wooden or other type of border that surrounds a painting.

You sound a little like Dr. Seuss when you’re drunk. ∴ I’m serious, serious I am.

Dr. Seuss was a well known Children’s book author, who often wrote in a colorful style, like the second sentence above.

In recognition of his outstanding achievements in the field of child psychology....

“In recognition of” is a formal way of saying “Thanks to...”

“Outstanding” is a strong adjective meaning exceptionally good.

...and his continuing efforts to improve the quality of life for countless children and their families.

This is a modern and widely used expression that refers to a variety of issues, including health, leisure time, and the environment.

The city of Philadelphia proudly bestows upon its son, Dr. Malcolm Crowe, the mayor’s citation for professional excellence.

“To bestow” an honor or award upon someone is to formally present them with it. A “citation” is an official acknowledgement of service.

Finally somebody has recognized the sacrifices that you have made.

In a general sense, “sacrifices” refer to what you may have given up, such as free time, in order to accomplish a goal.

They’re also saying that my husband has a gift.

As used here, “a gift” is a special talent or skill.

You teach children to be strong in situations where most adults would piss on themselves.

“To piss” is a widely used slang term meaning to urinate, or less formally, to go to the bathroom.

I would like some wine in a glass; I would not like it in a mug, I would not like it in a jug.

A “mug” is a type of cup, and a “jug” is a type of large container for pouring liquids. The sentence is very much spoken like Dr. Seuss.

You've broken a window and entered a private residence.
Another way to refer to a private house or apartment.

There are no needles or prescription drugs of any kind in this house.
"Prescription drugs" are those drugs that can only be obtained with the approval of a doctor.

Don't you even remember your own patients?...Downtown clinic, single parent family. Possible mood disorder.
A "clinic" is often a medical clinic, where patients are treated.
"Mood disorders" is a term that psychologists use to refer to types of emotional instability, such as paranoia or depression.

You told me that I was having trouble coping with my parent's divorce.
"To cope" with something is to try and deal with it, or accept it.

Ben Friedkin? :: Some people, they called me "freak."
A "freak" is a powerful word for a person who is considered crazy or abnormal in a disturbing way.

Quiet, very smart. **Compassionate**, unusually compassionate.
An important word to describe someone who has a great deal of emotional sympathy or concern for other people.

You forgot cursed. You failed me!
A person who is "cursed" is destined to have great suffering, perhaps because a God or ghost is determined to make them suffer. "To fail" someone is to greatly disappoint them, though it is rare to use the verb in this manner.

Several months after the shooting, Malcolm meets Cole, and tries one more time to save another disturbed child.

Cole, age 9, acute anxiety, socially isolated.
"Acute" is a strong adjective meaning severe or serious, and "anxiety" is an important word referring to great fear or nervousness about the future. A person who is "socially isolated" tends to avoid talking or dealing with people.

We were supposed to meet today, but I missed our appointment.
An important and formal word for a meeting.

In the olden days in Europe, people used to hide out in churches; They would claim sanctuary.
"Sanctuary" is a legal and religious term for protection from harm (Refugees from repressive governments still often seek sanctuary).

Latin.

The language of Ancient Rome and the Medieval Christian church.

[Written]---Out of the depths, I cry to you, oh lord.

The “depths” refer to the lowest places, perhaps emotionally as well as physically. “Lord” is another word for God.

Hey, your cocoa puffs are getting soggy.

“Cocoa puffs” are a popular children’s cereal, and “soggy” is the soft texture that cereal gets after it has stayed in milk too long.

Hey, got a spot.

In this case, another word for a stain (on clothes).

Something you were looking for baby? :: Pop tarts.

A much loved “junk food” dessert for children.

I was not thinking something bad about you. Got it?

“Got it?” is a very common way of asking if the listener understands.

You tuck it in.

“To tuck in” a shirt is to put the bottom inside other clothes, in order to make it appear neat (You can also tuck in the sheet of a bed).

Hey freak, how did you like that arm around the shoulder bit?

Note that when a person says “the....bit,” they are using bit as a noun to refer to any kind of action, often which is seen by many other people.

I just made that up. I went with it.

This is very modern slang; “To go” with something can mean to simply accept it and try to be emotionally comfortable with it (For example, to go with a controversial plan that you disagree with).

It’s what great actors do. It’s called improv.

“Improv” is short for improvisational, the form of acting in which there is no preparation or memorization, just spontaneous action.

I won the Pennsylvania lottery in the morning, I quit my job, and

I ate a big picnic in the park with lots of Chocolate Mousse Pie.

A “picnic” is an informal meal eaten outside, usually in a park.

“Chocolate Mousse” is a delicious and very rich dessert.

I was picked first for the kickball team at recess

and then I hit a grand slam to win the game.

“Recess” is the period of time where school children play sports.

A “grand slam” is a home run (hit) in the game of baseball.

Everybody lifted me on their shoulders and carried me around, cheering.
 “To cheer” is to enthusiastically applaud and scream encouragement.

Wanna play a game? It’s a mind reading game.
 Note that in rapid speech, “want to”---->”wanna.” To “read” a mind is to be able to tell what another person is thinking, even if they don’t say.

I drew a man. He got hurt in the neck by another man with a screwdriver.
 An important tool with a narrow blade at the end,
 which is used to turn screws in and out.

I draw rainbows; They don’t have meetings about rainbows.
 Cole’s way of saying that people don’t get upset when
 he draws things that are pretty and not violent.

***Malcolm tries to reconnect with Anna, as Cole tells Malcolm
 and his teacher some of the things the “ghosts” have told him.***

I thought you meant the other Italian restaurant
 where I asked you to marry me in.
 There are a couple things to notice about how this line is said,
 including the fact that the “in” at the end is unnecessary.

I just can’t seem to keep track of time.
 “To keep track” of something is to follow it, or be aware of it.

I didn’t have a very good session today.
 A “session” is the word psychologists use to describe
 their usual one hour meetings with their patients.

They’re both so similar. Same mannerisms, same
 expressions, same things hanging over their heads.
 A “mannerism” is a way or style of behaving, such as a nervous habit
 like avoiding eye contact. If something is “hanging over your head,”
 this often refers to a problem that has become a great worry.

He has fingernail cuts on his arm, but I don’t think it’s his
 mother. I’ve seen her with him and it doesn’t seem to fit.
 If something doesn’t “fit,” it could mean that the theory or guess one
 makes doesn’t seem correct or make sense (In this case, that Cole’s mom
 may be the one who has caused the fingernail cuts on his arm).

I know that I’ve been a little distant, and I know that it makes you mad.
 Note that a person can be both physically and emotionally distant.

I'm barely given a second chance and I don't want it to slip away.

"Barely" is an important adverb meaning "only just," or hardly.

I walk this way to school with Tony Tammasino. :: Is he your best buddy?

"Buddy" is another word for friend or pal.

Did your mom set that up?

In this case, to "set up" something is to organize or arrange it.

You are not a freak, and don't believe anybody who tries to convince you of that. That's **bullshit!**

"To convince" someone is to try and make them believe something.

"Bullshit" is a vulgar but very common word for lies, nonsense, etc.

You said "the S word."

Children will sometimes refer to shit as "the s word"

(And, of course, fuck as "the f word").

So your dad lives in Pittsburgh with a lady who works in a tollbooth.

This is the place where people collect money from cars that are about to go on a bridge. A "toll" is a charge or fee.

I wonder if she has to pee when she's working. Think she just holds it?

"To Pee" is to urinate, piss or more politely, go to the bathroom.

"To hold it" is an important expression referring to that situation where you feel the need to pee, but there is no place or time to do it!

Do you know what free association writing is, Cole?

A psychological expression referring to the act of just writing down (or saying) whatever thoughts or ideas comes to your mind.

What did you write? :: Upset words.

This is Cole's way of referring to words that are violent or disturbing.

I want you to think about what you wanna get out of our time together.

In this context, "to get out of" actually means to learn or accomplish.

I'm on my way to the flea market in the Amish country and I thought you might want to come along and show me how to buy at one of those things.

A "flea market" is an outdoor market where many different people sell various things from small booths or stands. "Amish Country" refers to the Amish people, a very religious and peaceful people who refuse to live with modern conveniences such as electricity. Many Amish live about an hour East of Philadelphia, in rural Pennsylvania.

I don't know if I can deal with the Amish today; You can't curse or spit around them.

In this case, "to deal with" people is to simply interact with them.

"To curse" is to use dirty words, such as "the f word!"

I just figured you'd want to get out and get some air,
because you seemed kind of down lately.

If someone appears down, this means they look sad or depressed.

Don't step in the horse manure!

"Manure" is a wonderful word for the animal shit that
is later used to help improve the soil and grow crops.

Keep moving, cheese dick!

A never used insult. "Dick" is a slang word for penis.

I'll give you a hint; It's the city you live in!

A "hint" is an excellent word which means a clue or any type of
information that will help a person solve a problem or mystery.

They used to hang people here.

A popular way of killing prisoners, by placing rope around their necks.

People watching...spit at them

"To spit" is to force liquid from the mouth, and as Cole suggests
here, an excellent way to express hatred or contempt.

This building was a legal courthouse; The whole
building was full of lawyers, lawmakers.

A formal word for the legislators or Congressmen who wrote laws.

You shouldn't look at people like that. You're stuttering Stanley!

"To stutter" is to speak in a way in which one can't help saying the
first consonant of a word many times before saying the whole word
(Stanley is the name of Cole's teacher).

You talked funny all the way to high school.

Cole's way of describing the way people who stutter speak.

***Cole continues to suffer, tortured both by the ghosts he sees
and the kids around him who are convinced he's "a freak."***

I do another magic shake, and right there in the vest pocket is the penny.

A "vest" is close fitting sweater, without sleeves, usually worn under
a jacket. A "penny" is one cent (penny-nickel-dime-quarter).

Malcolm, get your cute butt down here and listen up.

Your "butt" is your ass, derriere, or rear end.

"Listen up" is a slangy, assertive way of saying listen.

I'm talking about "Julie Andrews twirling around like a mental patient on a mountain top" kind of happy.

A reference to the movie "The Sound of Music," in which actress Julie Andrews dances with joy in a famous scene filmed on a mountain.

He hid in one of those purple plastic tunnels and didn't come out.

A popular type of toy for small children to play in.

Open the door. Please, come on.

"Come on" is the greatest and most versatile phrasal verb in English, meaning everything from "hurry up" to "be serious," or often, simply whatever was said before (in this case, please).

I swear on my life I didn't take the master's horse!

One way of saying "I swear to God," which is a promise to tell the truth.

Open the door or I'll break through it and grab you!

"To grab" something is to physically take it, often quickly or violently.

The star of the commercial always gets his own trailer. :: You only had one line!

In this context, a "trailer" is a small living area that is on wheels, like a bus, and a "line" is a sentence said in a film, or here, in a commercial.

Derrick, check it out!

"To check out" something is a common colloquial phrasal verb meaning to look at, or observe.

Were gonna put on a pretend play. Wanna be in it?

A child's way of referring to any kind of role-playing, even if not done in front of an audience.

It's called "Locked in the Dungeon."

A "dungeon" is the basement of a castle, where people were often imprisoned or even tortured during the Middle Ages.

The tests would indicate that he did not have a seizure.

A "seizure" is a medical word for a sudden muscular shaking, convulsion, or possibly even heart attack.

There are some cuts and bruises on your son that are concerning me.

An injury on the skin that often turns blue or another color.

She's a social worker with the hospital and she's going to ask you a couple procedural questions.

An adjective that refers to procedure, process, or simply the way things are done in law or business.

Did your father used to tell you bedtime stories?

The children's stories that parents tell their young kids when they go to bed in order to get them to fall asleep.

Once upon a time there was a young prince who wanted to go for a drive.

Note that in a car, one can go for a "drive" or a ride.

You haven't told bedtime stories before?

You have to add some twists and stuff.

In this case, a "twist" is an unexpected or surprising development.

Maybe they ran out of gas.

"To run out of" something is to no longer have any of it left.

He's not the same person he used to be and his wife doesn't like the person he has become.

Note that Malcolm will occasionally talk to Cole in the 3rd person (he), even when he is talking about himself.

They barely speak anymore. They're like strangers.

A sad, but perhaps not uncommon way to describe people who have been married a long time.

One day, Malcolm meets this really cool little boy, who reminds him a lot of the other one.

A critical colloquial word for nice, good, excellent, etc.

I see dead people! :: Dead people like in graves, in coffins?

"Graves" are the places where dead bodies are buried, and "coffins" are the boxes built to hold bodies in their graves.

They only see what they want to see; They don't even know that they're dead.

Cole's scary way of describing to Malcolm the ghosts that he sees.

Malcolm looks to the language of psychology in order to help Cole, as both his own wife and Cole's mom fight increasing stress and depression.

Cole has pathologies more severe than originally perceived.

A "pathology" is a medical word for disease, in this case of a psychological nature. "Severe" is an important word meaning very serious, and "perceived" means thought or observed.

He's suffering from visual hallucinations, paranoia and some kind of school age schizophrenia.

"Hallucinations" are visions and fantasies that people create in their minds, which they mistakenly think are real. "Paranoia" is a powerful word referring to the mistaken fear that one is being persecuted or attacked by others. "Schizophrenia" is an emotional disease of extreme mood disorders and inability to judge reality, that the public often associates with the phenomenon of "multiple personalities."

I'd like to talk to you about your boy and his friends keeping their goddamn hands off my son.

A crude but common adjective added to show emotion such as anger.

Do you think the play sucked big time?

If a play, movie or anything else "sucks big time," it is truly horrible. This is very slangy wording, although the verb "to suck" with this meaning is very common.

Tommy Tamassino acted in a cough drop commercial, and he said everyone was self-conscious and unrealistic.

A funny line, since acting in a commercial would hardly qualify you as an acting critic. In any case, "self-conscious" is an important word to describe a person who's too concerned with what others think of them.

This Tommy kid sounds like a real punk.

"Punk" is a word that has come to mean many things over the years, but in this case refers to an unpleasant, obnoxious or even violent kid.

"Cats?" :: Never mind.

"Cats" is the name of a famous Broadway play. "Never mind" is what you would say if you decide you no longer want to talk about what you just mentioned or said.

Be real still.

"To be still" is to not move at all.

You ever feel the prickly things on the back of your neck?

Things that are "prickly" on your skin feel like they have a gentle but sharp pointed sensation (like a cactus).

Please make them leave. :: I'm working on it.

An important phrasal verb. To be "working on" a problem is to try and think of a solution by thinking seriously about it.

"Pedia-ease cough suppressant. Gentle, fast, effective."

A suppressant is a medicine that tries to eliminate a symptom or problem, in this case coughing.

I saw what was in your bureau drawer when I was cleaning;
Got something that you want to confess?

“To confess” is an interesting verb meaning to admit something embarrassing, such a crime that one had committed.

The bumble bee pendent? Why do you keep taking it?

A “pendent” is a piece of jewelry that is often worn like a necklace.

If we can't talk to each other, were not gonna make it.

Cole's mom's way of saying that if they can't speak truthfully to each other, they won't be able to survive together.

It's Edwardian, beautifully worked with a miner's cut
and an actual color Burmese sapphire. It's timeless.

A sales person's way of describing an old and expensive ring.
Edwardian refers to a period of British history, and a sapphire is an expensive stone, usually of transparent blue color.

Got anything a little plainer? :: You want a
plain ring to go with your plain fiancée?

“Plain” is a word that usually means simple, though in this case it can simply mean cheap. Not a good adjective for a wedding ring!

Baby, don't get in a tissy.

An interesting slang word for an intense period of anger.

I think this piece communicates a longing.

A “longing” is a poetic word for a strong desire. This sentence is classic nonsense words designed to sell a piece of jewelry.

Did he have wavy hair and chestnut eyes?

Hair that is “wavy” is slightly curled or curved,
and eyes that are “chestnut” are of a pretty brown color.

I think you should choose a piece that speaks to you.

Another sentence that means nothing, designed to sell jewelry.

When they pass away, a part of themselves gets
printed on these things, like finger prints.

“To pass away” is a widely used phrasal verb meaning to die.
“Finger prints” are the marks of a finger that are used to identify people and which serve as evidence in investigations of a crime.

You don't need a guy with a masters, you need
a wrestler with a neck larger than his head.

A masters degree is a graduate university degree
(officially called an MA, or Master in Arts).

It's a first edition.

An "edition" of a book is a printing, with a set number made (A "revised edition" has been re-edited or changed from the original).

Don't give up! You're the only one that can help me, I know it!

A critical phrasal verb meaning to surrender, or stop trying.

When I was a kid, I had this blood test done, and I

threw up chili cheese all over this male nurse.

"To throw up" is to vomit. Note that people still assume that a nurse is female, and thus say "male nurse" when that is the case.

You been running around? Make you feel better?

"To run around" is a common phrasal verb meaning to go to many different places and do many different things, often in a hurried way.

Want to be a lance corporal in Company M third, battalion, 7th Marines?

These are all military terms that apply to the US marines, who are best known for fighting on beaches. A "corporal" is a low rank soldier (many levels below general), and both "company" and "battalion" refer to divisions or units of soldiers.

We're being dispatched into the Quang Nam province.

"To dispatch" troops is to send them, in this case to a province in Vietnam that was made famous during the Vietnam war.

You wigging out?

"To wig out" is a slangy way of saying to get too scared to continue.

Is someone hurting you? :: I'll kick their ass!

"To kick someone's ass" is a crude but common way of saying to physically attack them, or beat them up.

Cole and Malcolm go to the funeral of another child, and Cole once again tells what he learns from the ghosts of the dead.

I've heard the little one is falling ill. God help them.

"To fall ill" is to become sick. The second sentence is a set expression that people would say when a person they know is facing a crisis.

Don't say that it tastes funny. You know I don't like to hear that.

Note that people will use the adjective funny to describe the taste of something that is actually just bad or horrible.

She looked out for you.

“To look out for” a person is to watch over them, to make sure that they are not being harmed.

That’s enough makeup.

When used as a noun, “makeup” refers to cosmetics like lipstick.

They’re calling for the stable boy.

A person who works in a stable, which is a building where horses are kept and fed.

Just practicing my lines.

The words an actor would say before going on stage.

Only he who is pure of heart can take the sword from the stone.

A poetic way of speaking, typical of older (17th century) English.

Silence, village idiot.

An old and funny expression for the stupidest person in a small town.

Hail, King Arthur.

This is a silly word that people yell in respect when they see their king.

Maybe we can pretend that we can see each other tomorrow. Just for pretend.

This is Cole’s way of trying to make it easier to say goodbye to Malcolm.

Both Cole’s mom and Malcolm learn the shocking truth....

I’d give anything to have been there.

Cole’s mom’s way of apologizing for having not gone to his play.

She said that when you were little, she had a fight right before your dance recital.

A “recital” is a practice session for a dance or other artistic performance.

She hid in the back so that you wouldn’t see.

Note the past tense of the verb to hide.

It’s bittersweet for me, because I hate giving her up.

“Bittersweet” is a great little word that means happiness and sadness mixed together. It is said that the father of a bride “gives her up” to the new husband at a wedding, and that is why the day is bittersweet.

Goodnight, sweetheart.

Along with darling, dear and honey, the most common term of affection in American English.

The Sixth Sense

Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. Why are children more likely than adults to think they see ghosts?
2. Do you believe in ghosts? Spirits of any kind?
What about people in your culture?
3. How is modern psychology viewed in your country?
Would children go to a child psychologist?
4. What did you like or not like about this film?
5. Did the ending surprise you?

