

An illustration of a large, stylized hand reaching out from the left side of the frame. The hand is rendered in shades of brown and tan, with a textured, almost stippled effect on the fingers. The background is a warm, abstract composition of orange and yellow wavy lines, suggesting a sunset or a warm, glowing light. The overall style is modern and artistic.

# Grab My Hand: A Letter to My Dad

## VIEWING GUIDE

ABOUT  
THE FILM »

DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS »

ACTIVITIES »

MEDIA LITERARY  
RESOURCES »

## about the film

A personal story of grief, those we look up to, and how the interactions we may deem insignificant may play a huge part in how we live our lives. This beautiful animated short, is director Camrus Johnson's gift to his grieving father and a message to all to cherish every second you have with loved ones while you still can.

**Recommended for ages 7 and up.**

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All SFFILM Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy. SFFILM Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials.

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# about the director

**Directed and Produced by Camrus Johnson**

**(US, 2019) English, 5 min.**

Camrus Johnson is primarily a Film & Television actor who began acting at the age of 15 in his high school theater. He moved to New York in 2012 and has since begun his professional career as an entertainer. His acting career has recently taken off with the leading male role of "Luke Fox" in The CW's newest series **BATWOMAN** and he has officially made his animation/directing debut with **GRAB MY HAND!**



# subject areas

**English Language Arts**

**Media**

**Peer/Youth Issues**

# discussion questions

What are your first thoughts about the film? How did it make you feel? Could you relate to Camrus's story?

Why do you think Camrus wanted to tell such a personal story through film? Do you have a story you would like to make a film about? What would happen in that film?

Do you have any traditions or routines that you do with your friends or family like "Gate Check"? How did that tradition or routine start? Why is it important to you?

Have you ever lost someone important to you? How did you cope with it? What advice would you give to Camrus and his dad about handling loss?

Are there any films that help you process emotions? Maybe you once saw a film that you really related to, or one that made you feel better after you went through something difficult. Talk about that film! What about it helped you?

What are some ways you can maintain connections with your family and friends right now? Did you learn anything about communication from this film? Do you have anyone you check in with every day in the same way Camrus's dad checks in with his uncle Dewayne?

Do you have anyone in your life who is a superhero in your eyes? Why are they a superhero? How do they support the people around them?



# activities

## Describe Your Superhero

Read the quote from **Grab My Hand: A Letter to My Dad** located in the box to the right. How does Camrus define a superhero? How does his definition of a superhero compare to yours?

In your opinion, what makes someone a superhero? What traits do they have?

Write about a superhero in your life. Draw them and design their superhero costume. If you're feeling inspired, make a comic strip or storyboard about their life!



## Soup Bowl Breathing

Soup Bowl Breathing is a mindfulness exercise meant to help you stay calm, happy, and focused. Here's how it works!

Cup your hands in front of you like you're holding a bowl of warm soup. Imagine it is your favorite kind of soup. Now imagine that someone special made you that soup. Maybe it's a friend, maybe it's a family member, but it's definitely a person who cares about you.

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“You know that old saying, ‘you are who you surround yourself with’? That must make my dad a pretty hilarious, compassionate, giving, superhero; who makes mistakes just like anybody else. Because that’s my uncle Dewayne. They’re two superheroes that don’t have it all figure out. But they’ll never let you know that. Because whatever you need, even if they don’t know how to get it; they’ll find a way to help. That’s what superheroes do.”

Think about that person while you take a deep breath into your belly. You should feel your stomach expand as you breathe in. Hold that breath for four seconds.

As you let your breath out, blow on your soup to cool it off. Repeat this breathing a few times until you feel calmer. Bonus points if you pretend to eat the soup after you're done cooling it off with your breathing!

## practice mindfulness

To start, find a comfortable place to sit. Take a deep breath and notice your surroundings. Then, either out loud, on a piece of paper, or in your head, take note of...

**5 Things You See:** Cast your eyes around and bring your attention to five things you might not normally notice. Choose things you wouldn't ordinarily pay attention to, like a shadow or a small crack in the concrete.

**4 Things You Feel:** Bring your awareness to four things you are currently feeling, like the texture of your pants, the feeling of the breeze on your skin, or the smooth surface of a table you are resting your hands on.

**3 Things You Hear:** Listen carefully. If you're outside, you might hear wind rustling the leaves in the trees. If you're at home, you might hear the TV playing in the other room.

**2 Things You Smell:** Tune your senses into smells you might usually gloss over, whether they're pleasant or unpleasant.

**1 Thing You Taste:** Focus on one thing you can taste right now, in this moment. You can take a sip of juice, savor some fruit, or maybe just notice the current taste in your mouth.

Once you've finished, take another deep breath. How do you feel?

# media literacy resources: screening with meaning

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. Every projected image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the medium, through the language of the device. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Most students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive. Analysis of a media message—or any piece of mass media content—can best

be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

- (1) Medium: the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
- (2) Author: the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
- (3) Content: the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
- (4) Audience: the target audience to whom it is delivered
- (5) Purpose: the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active citizens and critical thinkers.

## common core standards

### **MEDIUM**

**All Media Is Constructed.**

- What is the message, how is it delivered and in what format?
- What technologies are used to present the message?
- What visual and auditory elements comprise the media content?
- What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?

### **CONTENT**

**Media Is A Language For Information.**

- What is the subject of the media message?
- What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content?
- What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response?
- To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?

### **PURPOSE**

**All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.**

- Why was the message constructed?
- Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How?
- To what extent does the message achieve its purpose?
- What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?

### **AUTHOR**

**All Media Is Constructed by Someone.**

- Who is delivering the message?
- Who originally constructed the message?
- What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?

### **AUDIENCE**

**All Media Messages Reach an Audience.**

- Who receives the message?
- For whom is the message intended?
- What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message?
- How might others perceive this message differently? Why?