

Movie Kit



American
Spaces



Joy

Director: David O. Russell

Year made: 2015

Starring: Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro, Bradley Cooper

Rating: PG-13

Length: 2h 4min

English level: Medium

Themes: Women's Empowerment, Entrepreneurship

Warning/General Advisory

Includes occasional profane language, a death scene, some violence, mild alcohol consumption, and divorce.

Context

Set in a working-class suburb of New York in the 1990s, *Joy* is the story of a mother who invents a self-wringing mop (the first of its kind). The movie follows the financial difficulties and challenges that Joy faces while starting her business, including trouble with patents and declaring bankruptcy. Through the help of her family and friends, Joy becomes a successful businesswoman. This movie highlights the important themes of women's empowerment and entrepreneurship.

Key Vocabulary/Places

- **mop** - an implement consisting of a sponge or a bundle of thick loose strings attached to a handle, used for wiping floors or other surfaces
- **K-Mart** – a large, department store chain
- **QVC** – an American cable, satellite and broadcast television network, and multinational corporation specializing in televised home shopping
- **patent** – a government authority or license conferring a right or title for a set period, especially the sole right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention
- **bankruptcy** – the state of being unable to pay outstanding debts
- **cable TV** – a system in which television programs are transmitted to the sets of subscribers by cable rather than by a broadcast signal
- **royalty** – a sum of money paid to a patentee for the use of a patent or to an author or composer for each copy of a book sold or for each public performance of a work.
- **matriarch** – a woman who is the head of a family or tribe
- **HSN** – “Home Shopping Network” - an American broadcast, basic cable and satellite television network

Discussion Questions

- Describe Joy's family. What are they like? Who does she live with?
- How does Joy start the process of creating her self-wringing mop? What challenges does she face, from businessmen and from her family?
- How does Joy's grandma Mimi inspire her? What does she mean to Joy, and what does Joy mean to her grandma?
- Why do Joy's father and girlfriend tell her to declare bankruptcy? How does Joy respond?
- Have you ever been in a situation where people doubted your ability? What did you do to prove them wrong?
- What happens to Joy at the end? Does her business succeed?
- Have you ever invented anything or had any ideas for a new product, like Joy's self-wringing mop?