

In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, Oedipus has the courage to leave the comfort of his royal home in Corinth and starts his journey for his personal truth. He does not remain idle in his life. He refuses to accept what he is told; he wants to find out the truth for himself. This is his personality, and it is this that takes him from Corinth to Delphi and finally to Thebes. In the end, the truth devastates Oedipus and his family, but he does complete what he has set out for. On his journey, he learns of his true identity and he also gains wisdom from his suffering. Many men would not have ventured outside the security of their royal lives. They would rather remain blissfully ignorant. Oedipus is of a different character and nature. Oedipus has the courage and takes the initiative to find his true identity, gains wisdom and is therefore considered a better man.

In the beginning of the play, Oedipus is revered and respected as a great king. He is admired as the savior of Thebes. The superficial view is that he has everything: wealth, power, family. But in reality, Oedipus is lost; he has not a clue of his horrible sins. The truth is that he has murdered his own father, wed and has children with his mother. The offspring are his children and also his siblings. This truth is incredibly disturbing. Even before his fate had been carried out, there were incredible risks that Oedipus ignored. Despite the risks of the initial search, Oedipus continues until he finally learns of his true identity. He also embarks on a mission to seek out the murderer of the late king Laïos. He is determined to save the city of Thebes once more. In actuality, Oedipus's persistent search is typical of his character.

Oedipus's relentless search for truth stems from his personality. He is stubborn and very persistent. Oedipus is also very selfish and very incredulous if he does not agree with what is said. For example, Oedipus asks the prophet, Teiresias, for help, but when Teiresias does not reveal the identity, Oedipus becomes enraged and reacts irrationally. This angers Teiresias and finally he tells Oedipus that it was he who killed King Laios. Refusing to listen to the prophet, Oedipus accuses Teiresias and Kreon of treason:

“If Kreon, whom I trusted, Kreon my friend, / For this great office [and] ... for this power/ Kreon desires in secret to destroy me!” (369-372) “And it is this man [Oedipus] you think you can destroy,/ That you may be close to Kreon when he is king!/ Well, you and your friend Kreon, it seems to me,/ Will suffer most.” (385-389)

His irrational outburst reveals his rash personality. Oedipus also displays his character through his search for the truth. He continues the search until his final demise.

Oedipus's search for his true identity starts with the ramblings of an intoxicated man. The drunken man tells Oedipus that he is not the son of his parents. His remarks are incredibly traumatic and confusing for Oedipus. Oedipus confronts his parents and they deny the drunk's remarks. The experience festers in the back of Oedipus's mind until one day Oedipus finally leaves Corinth in search of the truth. He travels to Thebes to ask the oracle of the validity of the drunk's comments. The oracle does not grant Oedipus an answer leaving the question remaining in his mind for many years. He solves the riddle of the Sphinx and becomes the king of Thebes. Many years later a plague strikes the city. Oedipus sends his brother-in-law, Kreon, to ask the oracle for the reason. She reveals the troubling reason- the unidentified murderer of the previous king, Laios: "He was murdered: and Apollo commands us now/ To take revenge upon whoever killed him." (109-110) Teiresias, a blind prophet, is summoned to help with the search. Oedipus's

insolent and impulsive character aggravates Teiresias until Teiresias finally identifies Oedipus as the old king's murderer: "I charge you, then/. You yourself are the pollution of this country." (334, 338) This restarts Oedipus's old search for his true identity. As he continues, Oedipus's downfall becomes more eminent until finally Oedipus finds the truth.

Oedipus's identity changes from the son of Polybus and Merope to Laïos and Iokastê's son and finally to his father's murderer and his mother's lover. In the end, the truth tears Oedipus' family apart as Iokastê kills herself and Oedipus stabs out his eyes and exiles himself from Thebes forever. Oedipus gains respect as a result of not committing suicide and taking responsibility for his actions. Oedipus also gains wisdom. His search leads him through incredible heights and incredible lows; he becomes a wiser man through his suffering.

By the end of the play, Oedipus learns more than just his true identity; he earns respect and gains wisdom. He is respected because he does not remain passive; he has the courage and takes the initiative to find out for himself. In the end, Oedipus completes his journey; he reaches his goal. He finds out his true identity and acquires wisdom along the way. This is something that many men are not able to accomplish. In this aspect, Oedipus is a better man.