

Successful parent-child relationships essay

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



My only memories as a child were that of the time I spent at a Chinese Restaurant our family owned for 22 years.

Since it was a family owned and operated business, I had to be there every day 365 days a year and like any child, I never understood why. All I thought about is why I had to be stuck at a boring restaurant while my friends enjoyed their days after school playing and having fun which left me feeling resentment. After feeling resentment towards my parents for years, those negative feelings slowly morphed into pleasant irreplaceable memories of the time I spent with my parents and three brothers. What I thought to be a horrible childhood became some of the best memories of my life that I will cherish forever. While reading four short stories, Fish Cheeks by Amy Tan, Brad Manning's Arm Wrestling with my Father, Once more to the lake by E. B.

White , and Sarah Vowell's Shooting Dad, they reminded me of my tough childhood and what it took to become a successful parent child relationship; spending quality time, understanding between the parent and child, and most of all, creating valuable memories. Spending quality time reverberates throughout Once More to the Lake by the father taking his own son to the very lake in which the father's own father had taken him as a boy, in which the author conveys a sentimental feeling harkening back to his own childhood. In a sense, the fatherly circle of life demonstrates how much the individualized attention meant to the father and is a relationship he now desires to pass on. Since the story is from the father's perspective, we do not understand his son's perspective of their relationship, but instead, we see a successful relationship with the father in the story and his own father.

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Furthermore, in *Shooting Dad*, spending quality time is seen again when the daughter realizes that her and her father are one in the same. In this short story, neither gunsmith father or his Democrat daughter have any real interest in the activities of one another.

One day, both of them go out on the mountain to shoot off the father's homemade cannon for the first time ever. As her father is shooting off the cannon, the daughter is using her tape recorder to record the noise and realizes they are "both smart-alecky loners with goof projects and weird equipment" (Vowell 159). By spending quality time with his daughter, the father has helped her discover their similarities and while they are different in their interests; they are apparently the same and were able to make an inseparable connection.

Secondly, an understanding between parent and child can be seen in *Arm Wrestling with My Father* when the father offers a hug to replace the handshake his son presented. Throughout the story, the son explained that his father never displayed his affection verbally; instead, he showed his affection through physical means which the son never understood because he always wanted to hear his father say "I love you". However, in the conclusion of the story, the son understood his father's characteristic of being the physical type and speculated a hug was his way of saying I love you. Another example of understanding between parent and child can be found in *Fish Cheeks* as seen in the mother and daughter dynamic. Here the daughter is from Chinese decent and wanted to impress an American boy that went over for dinner with his family; meanwhile, the mother cooked a

feast of Chinese entrees for the gathering including a steamed fish. When the fish arrived at the dinner table, her father offered her favorite part of the fish, the fish cheek. Feeling embarrassed, she wanted to disappear.

Later after dinner, her mother said her “ You want to be the same as American girls on the outside... but inside you much always be Chinese” which shows that her mother understood what her daughter wanted and went through during dinner. Even though this was not a happy time for her, she understood the purpose of the strange menu years later. Lastly, Once More to the Lake, Shooting with Dad, Arm Wrestling with my father and Fish Cheeks all share one common trait; valuable memories. As we see in Once More to the Lake, The father recalls the memories that he shared with his own father and wanted to give his son the same memories that he shared with his father. In Shooting Dad, the daughter was able to remember that defining moment when she realized she was like her father and how it changed her view of their relationship 180 degrees.

Also, in Arm Wrestling with My Father, the son was able to recall the times he spent arm wrestling his father as a child, although the memories served as negative ones, but as he matured, those memories became positive recollections that he will cherish for a lifetime. Finally, in Fish cheeks, the daughter recalled on the memory of that horrible Christmas eve and understands what it meant to be Chinese. Whether it is spending time on a lake, shooting cannons, arm wrestling or feeling embarrassed of our family, without these memories, there is no foundation for a strong relationship to build on. As children mature into adults, they have the ability to understand

and comprehend the full meaning of their negative or positive memories and realize that in the end a parent's intent is to care for their child to the best of their ability.

In closing, just like any relationship, building a positive relationship between parent and child is one that requires work and effort to make it strong and successful. Parenting is definitely a tough job and as we've seen in *Once more to the lake*, *Shooting with Dad*, *Arm Wrestling with my father* and *Fish Cheeks*, spending quality time, understanding between the parent and child, and most of all, creating valuable memories helps to ensure parents and their children stay connected and have a successful relationship through all ages of their upbringing.