

Can love us and which we can love argumentative essay examples

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According to Emerson (7), “ The higher the style we demand of friendship, of course the less easy to establish it with flesh and blood. We walk alone in the world. Friends, such as we desire, are dreams and fables. But a sublime hope cheers ever the faithful heart, that elsewhere, in other regions of the universal power, souls are now acting, enduring, and daring, which

The writer of this paper finds Emerson’s claims to be logical and reasonable and is in agreement that indeed friendships are harder to find and establish as our standards for them become higher, that is, if one hopes for true friendship.

As the different authors Aristotle (1), Emerson (4), Hall and Ames (12), and Meilaender (8) assert, there are different kinds of friendship, and these kinds of friendships further differ from each other, depending on the author’s perspective. For example, while Aristotle and Emerson define friendship from a philosophical perspective, Hall and Ames and Meilaender define friendship from more of a religious and cultural perspective. It can be said, however, that all of them have a classification of friendship that matches what Emerson describes as the higher style we demand of friendship (Emerson 7).

In the same manner, Meilaender (8) says that if friendship is based on preferential love in that it is characterized as a preference for and a deep attachment to another person because of the kind of person that he or she is, then “ it must cease when the characteristics that gave rise to such preference are no longer present” (Meilaender 8). Just as Aristotle proposed, Meilaender (8) posits that friendship ends when the mutually shared and the

reciprocity of the goodwill is gone. Furthermore, Meilaender (9) claims that “where character is not yet relatively formed, character-friendships must necessarily be unstable.” He explains that as temporal beings, people constantly change, and with friendship greatly depending on shared enjoyments and interests, it can easily be destroyed or weakened as circumstances change (Meilaender 10).

Still, from quite another point of view, Emerson depicts the temporality of friendship by saying that “as soon as the stranger begins to intrude his partialities, his definitions, his defects, into the conversation, it is all over” (Emerson 4). He goes further to say that “vulgarity, ignorance, misapprehension are old acquaintances” (Emerson 4).

For Aristotle (2), true or perfect friendship can exist only among good people, that is, among those who are good in themselves; those who wish each other well; and those who are similar in excellence. Friendships among these kinds of people are long-lasting because they wish their friends well for their friends' sake and not for their own. They are good by nature and their goodness is not incidental. This is supported by Emerson (5) who asserts that a friend is better than one's self, that is, each friend exalts in each other's victory. As such, “their friendship lasts as long as they are good” (Aristotle 2). This is especially true because being good also means that both friends are useful and pleasant to each other – only in this case, the usefulness and pleasure provided are without qualification. As well, these qualities are considered the most lovable ones (Aristotle 2).

Aristotle (3) further asserts that bad people are not capable of friendship as

they do not delight in others unless they can benefit from the relation. This view is shared by Meilaender (9) who believes that faithful love -- which is required in true friendships - should not be concerned with reciprocity and should not be preferential. According to Meilaender (10), faithfulness requires a stable purpose that persists even when the enjoyments are no longer possible.

Emerson also has the same criteria for true friendship as Aristotle has, except that Emerson narrows down the criteria of being good to the existence of the qualities of truth and tenderness (Emerson 5-6). According to Emerson (6), every man is sincere only when alone but that hypocrisy arises as a second person enters. A true friend is then one who allows the other to be sincere and honest about one's thoughts; hence, a friend accepts the other for their true selves. This is supported by Hall and Ames (12) who state that in classical Chinese, friendship is based on appreciated differences -- instead of similarities -- between two people, which in turn allow for character development.

Emerson (6) goes further to say that true friendship requires tenderness, that is, true friendship cannot be measured by superficialities and should not be taken for granted. Instead, he asserts that true friendship offers comfort and aid throughout life and death, that is, it is shared not only through the good times but even through the tough times (Emerson 6). It is characterized by unity, wisdom, and courage (Emerson 6).

With these criteria for true friendships, the authors assert that true friendship is rare. As Aristotle (2) claims, very few are truly good people. He

also suggests that true friendships need familiarity and time, that is, two people are not friends until they have grown to love and trust each other (Aristotle 2). As such, it may be easy and quick to wish to be friends, but to actually develop a friendship requires time and that the persons involved have love for each other (Aristotle 2). This kind of friendship, however, can be said to be complete and is likely to become permanent as both parties get the same benefits from the friendship (Aristotle 2-3). Just as Confucius claims (Hall and Ames 13), there are undoubtedly many friends whom one finds at the start. However, those who remain and represent the quality of difference that is needed for continued growth become hard to find (Hall and Ames 13).

In the same manner, Emerson (5) compares true friends to the most solid things we know and not to frostwork or glass threads. He believes that friendships “ require natures so rare and costly” (Emerson 6) that its assurance is uncertain. To add to this rare quality of friendship, Emerson believes that friendship requires the right balance of likeness and unlikeness, yet, just as Aristotle asserts, there should be a genuine acceptance of each other’s differences (Emerson 7). Also, despite being paired with another, one should never lose one’s own person for “ we must be our own before we can be another’s” (Emerson 7). As Confucius also states, friends must retain their individual integrity even as they complement each other (Hall and Ames 12). Similarly, “ the only way to have a friend is to be one” (Emerson 7), that is, only if nature uprises in one to the same degree that it does in the other can friendship be established (Emerson 7).

For Meilaender (9), true friendship is rare because of the incompatibility

between fidelity and friendship, that is, for true friendship to be achieved, the parties involved must sacrifice their delights of reciprocity and preference (Meilaender 9). However, the irony is that friendship can be enjoyed “ only by sacrificing the assurance of permanence” (Maeilaender 9).

Yet, despite the rarity of true friends and the difficulty of finding one, man longs for friendships. As Aristotle says, “ men apply the name of friends even to those whose motive is utility” (Aristotle 3). Emerson (5), on the other hand asserts that “ the instinct of affection revives the hope of union with our mates”; and “ thus, every man passes his life in the search after friendship” (Emerson 5). Similarly, Meilaender (9) asserts that people neither want to sacrifice the enjoyment derived from friendship nor its permanence.

Everyone wants faithful friendship despite the uncertainty of whether this can be obtained or not (Meilaender 9). Moreover, one continues to hope that the day will come when friendship may become possible and when change and temporality may not have such an influence on commitments as they do now (Meilaender 10).

However, being impatient may lead one to the wrong friends, which may then result in more harm than good (Emerson 7). As such, Emerson (8) urges that one should not be afraid of making ties too spiritual for the fear of losing genuine love. He assures that in time, nature will bring to us what is truly good for us (Emerson 8). He then encourages setting high standards for the friends we choose - that is, friends who can give of themselves without taking away our identity from us (Emerson 8). In the same manner, Meilaender (10) suggests that the friend be tested before friendship is

offered. He suggests conducting a long probation prior to entry in a friendship, which also supports Aristotle's claims that true friendship needs time and familiarity. Meilaender (10) goes further to suggest that care should be exercised in forming friendships. Moreover, he advises that people choose as friends those who are constant, steadfast, and firm (Meilaender 10). This, however, adds to the difficulty of finding true friends in that pain and grief cannot be avoided. One only gets to determine whether another is a good friend or not by getting to know that person better. This in turn involves investing a little of oneself in the other person and by the time the other person is determined as incompatible to oneself, some damage may have already been done (Meilaender 11).

Still, the writer of this paper remains in favor of Emerson's claim, that although setting high standards for the friends we choose make friendship difficult to achieve and although this may leave us feeling alone at times, there is indeed hope that somewhere there is a soul who is willing to love us and whom we can love (Emerson 7), and that if we just patiently wait then it will all be worthwhile in the end.

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