

Most important elements in a relationship



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Important Elements in a Relationship There are many ways that a social relationship can form and build to be happy and successful. While these ways are numerous, the construction of these relationships tend to be lengthy and tedious; their strength is built over time and their success is dependent on effort. Unfortunately, it takes even less time, less effort, and fewer elements to make a good relationship fail and the parties to become unhappy with one another. Amy Tan's *Half and Half* and Irwin Shaw's *The Girls in Their Summer Dresses* divulge into many concepts of what elements construct good relationships and what elements can bring them crashing down. In *Half and Half*, the relationship between Rose and Ted grew due to them trying to prove their mothers wrong. Both of their mothers felt that the relationship was not going to be successful. Rose and Ted used this as a reason to force their relationship to work. However, this is also the reason that their relationship ended up failing. "With imagined tragedy hovering over us, we became inseparable (Tan, 89-90)." Instead of staying together willingly, they stayed together to show their mothers that they were wrong in predicting anything negative coming from the relationship. By claiming that there was imagined tragedy and by going off blindly together, they created despair that could have been avoided. They forced themselves to get along, putting on the disguise of a happy relationship, a disguise that even fooled Rose and Ted for some time. The one element that was missing to form a successful relationship was honest love for one another. Similarly, just as Rose's mother depended on hope to find her son after he was swept out to sea, Rose depended on hope to save her marriage, but it was all for nothing. "There is no hope. There's no reason to keep trying (Tan, 516-517)."

Another element that led to the failure of Rose and Ted's relationship was a

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lack of hope. Very little was attempted to make the relationship work out, and a lot of it had to do with Rose's absence of hope. Rather than consider ways that the relationship could be approved upon, Rose simply came to the conclusion that nothing could be done. As such, the marriage could not be saved. In *The Girls in Their Summer Dresses*, humor and dedication are revealed to be primary elements to a successful, healthy relationship. The downfall in the relationship between Michael and Frances, though, was Michael's unwavering attention to other women. Due to Michael's questionable faithfulness, there is no trust between the two, which is an element that should not exist in a relationship. Michael makes it quite clear that his wife is not the only woman that he is interested in. Michael is shallow, focusing only on appearances; he even focuses on the appearance of his wife, though it is done in the same way that he notices other women. "Michael watched her walk, thinking, what a pretty girl, what nice legs (Shaw, 269)." Despite being married, Michael is still very detached from his wife, showing how a lack of faithfulness and trust can ruin a seemingly perfect relationship. Relationships can thrive with love, hope, and faithfulness, but they can also suffer greatly when these vital elements are missing.

Relationships are too complex to just happen or to work out simply because the two people involved want it to. Effort needs to be put in from both parties if a relationship is expected to be successful and lasting. In *Half and Half*, Rose had no hope that the relationship would last. In *The Girls in Their Summer Dresses*, Michael had no desire to be in a serious relationship. To make a relationship work, both people need to be willing and active to meet in the middle. Works Cited Shaw, Irwin. *Short Stories: Five Decades*. Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 2000. Print. Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. New York: Penguin Books, 1989. Print.