

Family effect on theme

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Family ties and relationships contain a major impact on levels of stress and anxiety for people especially when those relations are strained. In Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find"; and Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" the relations between mothers and their children are strained which cause stress and anxiety in the characters which becomes evident when identifying the themes of both stories.

Through the analyzation of each stories theme, one may gain a greater understanding of specific effects that strained relations place on those involved as well as the impact on the overall reading of these strained relations. In Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" there are multiple themes which present evidence as to different impacts on strained family relations. In the story, the unnamed grandmother considers herself superior to all based on the fact of her being a lady. Since the grandmother believes being a lady makes her morally higher than others, she also considers herself to be the "right" person to pass judgement onto others and decide whether they are worthy of being deemed a "good" person. However, this is extremely hypocritical of the grandmother since she herself should not be considered a good person. She exemplifies her selfishness in various moments throughout the story by lying to her grandchildren, manipulating her own son, and constantly dwelling on the imperfections of the present. When faced with the moment of the Misfit killing her entire family, the grandmother never pleads for the sparing of her children or grandchildren but has no problem begging for her own life because the Misfit shouldn't "kill a lady". It is not only until right before her death that she shouts to the Misfit, "Why you're one of us, you're one of my own children!"

In this moment, the grandmother recognizes for the first time that they are both human beings and she contains the capacity to show compassion toward someone other than herself.

The grandmother's inability to care about anyone other than herself led to strained relations with all members of her family. Her selfishness leads to the murder of her entire family when she suggests going to see an old house on their way to Florida which leads to the car crash that ultimately led to the Misfit finding them and killing them. It isn't until after this series of events that the grandmother realizes the house she was remembering was actually in Tennessee which is not even remotely close to where they were. After putting her family in such danger, she still only cares in making sure the Misfit spares her life. The short story "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker is also an excellent example of how family strains can cause stress and anxiety on the family members. In this story it is more evident the relationship between mother and child is lacking. The narrator of the story is Mama who is a strong single parent to her two daughters. Mama has sacrificed a lot to grant her children a better life than the circumstances she was upbrought in and holds a strong pride in her heritage. Maggie is the younger more reserved child who struggles with confidence and would rather avoid an argument with her older sister Dee than fight for the quilts which Mama had originally promised her.

Dee is the older sibling who lacks respect for anyone but herself. Mama constantly worked as hard and as much as possible to grant Dee the education that she did not have the privilege of receiving. However, Mama's

lack of education along with Dee's lack of respect ultimately ended up causing a further divide in their relationship. Dee constantly using her education as a way of intimidating her mother and sister has not only caused a disconnect between her family, as well as a disconnect to her self worth. The absence of relationship between Mama and Dee is most likely the reason Dee has no grasp of respect for her elders or appreciation for family. Although both stories have different plots and storylines, the idea that having no family connection or relations causes negative personality changes is evident in both. In "A Good Man is Hard to Find" grandmother is extremely selfish and only thinks of herself in all scenarios. As well, in "Everyday Use", Dee is so caught up in only caring about her own world that she is constantly disrespectful and talks down to Mama and Maggie. If both grandmother and Dee had a stronger sense of the importance of family and gave more effort and love to their relatives maybe they wouldn't have such a negative outlook on life. Personality traits and family relations often explain a lot about someone as well as cause a major impact on the overall theme of each story. Due to the lack of relationships and appreciation for family, these characters must rely solely on themselves to create their own happiness and meaning for life. With this, it is a lot harder to find true comfort in life which grandmother realizes right before her death. Minutes before being killed by the Misfit, grandmother realizes that she is a human just like everyone else and that simply being a lady does not make her superior to others. Although grandmother had her epiphany and realization before passing even though it was too late, Dee never put in the effort to make amends and create a relationship with hers. Rather than recognizing her roots and being proud of

where she came from, Dee chose to remain selfish and cut off all ties with her family.