

Love, relationships and mutual respect in "the kite runner"

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Love is a universal topic that has been discussed since the advent of language. The idea of love never seems to be out of date. However, many people are struggling to get the love that they desire because love is not expressed in an effective way. Therefore, people's sense of well-being is affected. This issue is much more prominent today than before especially when it comes to family members and friends. In the novel, *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini, highlights how most relationships are strained at one point or another by depicting how various characters express love towards one another. By showing relationships between different characters, readers learn about the key elements of a healthy relationship. The essential parts for a stable and long-lasting love between people are engaging in one another's life in a mutually acceptable way, mutual respect, and mutual understanding.

Engaging in other's lives in a way that is mutually acceptable is vital for the relationship to flourish. On one hand, giving too little love, attention, and responsiveness, which is also known as emotional neglect, can distance people. Children who lack emotional needs are usually those who are unsupervised, left aside, and do not get to have their regular one-on-one time with their parents. Children living under this environment are not taught the importance of values, morals, and respect for self and others. This is evident in *The Kite Runner*: Baba seems aloof when Amir won the poem battle against the entire class by just saying "good" (Hosseini 20). Also, "Baba went on staring (Amir) down, and didn't offer to read" when Amir is eager to share his new story in front of Baba and Rahim Khan (34). In these

cases, Baba shows little fatherly love because he does not seem to care about Amir's success and hobbies and this is emotional neglect.

Emotional neglect makes Amir have the thought of Khan being his father instead of Baba (34) because Khan seems to be more engaged in Amir's life and cares more about Amir. Amir's craving for father's love has led to misbehaviours and immoral acts. Later on in the novel, Amir frames Hassan by putting his watch and money under Hassan's bed so that he can win Baba's love back because he thinks that Hassan is "the lamb I had to slay to win Baba" (82). Therefore, it is easy to conclude that with the love and care, children will have better self-esteem, make better decisions, and express their needs in an appropriate way. While on the other hand, emotional abuse, which means exposure to harsh behaviours such as scolding and name-calling, will give rise to psychological issues.

A study finds that children who are emotionally abused are "12 times more likely to be schizophrenic than the general population (compared with six times for the physically abused and twice as likely for the sexually abused)" (James). The British government also has taken action by making emotional abuse illegal under the new domestic abuse law in 2014 (Iqbal and Doran). we see that both emotional neglect and abuse are not considered to be mutually acceptable ways to engage with each other nor express love because of the detrimental consequences. The negative effects of emotional abuse and neglect are especially evident in the case of parents and children as readers can witness how the relationship between Amir and Baba is being portrayed in *The Kite Runner*. To conclude, either emotional neglect or

emotional abuse is deleterious to one's well-being. Hence, love should be expressed in an appropriate way that both sides can accept.

Besides engagement in other's lives, mutual respect is also an important factor that influences relationships between people. A shocking survey conducted by Relate shows that as much as 10% of the British population does not have a close friend to turn to (Sherwood). However, a genuine friendship is not hard to find. The secret to a long-lasting and healthy relationship is the absence of pride (Lott): people should respect what others want to pursue and achieve in life as well as their cultural background and beliefs. In turn, people can also feel that they are being respected by others. While stereotypes and biased points of view will lead to a rupture of the relationship because the other half that we are engaging with will feel disrespected and being looked down on.

The idea of mutual respect can also be found in *The Kite Runner*. Mutual respect does not seem to exist between Amir and Hassan because Amir thinks that "in the end, (he) was a Pashtun and (Hassan) was a Hazara, (he) was Sunni and (Hassan) was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that. Nothing" (27). Additionally, Amir does not stand up for Hassan when he is being bullied by Assef and other children because he thinks that Hassan is just a Hazara at the end of the day (82). In the Afghan culture, the Pashtuns are regarded as the real Afghans while Hazaras are always considered as the minority and the outsiders. Little respect is shown to the Hazaras. This biased thought is also demonstrated in *The Kite Runner* as Amir never considers Hassan as his friend either because of their his cultural

backgrounds and ethnicities. Even though Hassan has a selfless love for Amir and they grow up together, the bond between them has become weaker and weaker because Hassan does not feel the respect from Amir due to Hassan's identity.

Mutual respect is absent in their relationship. However, as time goes by, Amir finally knows the importance of mutual respect. He stands up for Sohrab, who is a Hazara, by telling General Sahib "never again refer to (Sohrab) as a 'Hazara boy' in (Amir's) presence" (380). By showing respect and love to Sohrab, Sohrab is gradually willing to live with Amir and Soraya as a family member in the end as he smiles when he is flying the kite with Amir (391). From the examples above, readers see that a one-sided relationship, which only takes or only gives, is not going to last long. The relationship is based on mutual respect. Therefore, mutual respect is an indispensable part of people's relationships.

Apart from the two factors discussed above, mutual understanding contributes to a healthy and stable relationship as well. There is a 251.8% increase in divorce rate when comparing the divorce rate in 1960 and 2017 (Robinson) and incompatibility is the greatest factor that leads to the divorce. So the importance of mutual understanding can be easily seen in maintaining a relationship. Mutual understanding means making a compromise when necessary and demonstrating concerns when others are going through tough times. Patience and forbearance are key. By showing understanding and consideration to each other, people will have the capacity to comprehend themselves and live a happy life together.

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir seems calm and he accepts the fact that Soraya does not have the ability to have babies. When it comes to adopting children, Amir shows his understanding and support to Soraya by saying that “(they) should both be in agreement” if they want to adopt children (197). What Amir says makes Soraya feel relieved as she feels sorry for not being able to have children and she seems hesitant when it comes to adoption. In turn, Soraya also shows her understanding when Amir decides to go to Pakistan to visit his old friend Rahim Khan. Although it is not safe to go to Kabul, Soraya still supports Amir because going to Pakistan seems to be important for Amir (201). With Soraya’s understanding, Amir will feel that he is being supported and is more determined in his actions. Consequently, it is easy to conclude that mutual understanding is essential for the relationship to flourish.

By involving in each other’s lives in an appropriate way, respecting every last one, and understanding each and everyone around, relationships with friends and family will become stable and healthy. Love and relationship are crucial parts of the Maslow’s Hierarchy. Love and relationships should not be considered as conveniences and ways to fight off boredom. Pure and genuine relationships can only be found with a caring, respectful, and understanding soul.