

A successful relationship is the Holy Grail in life for most people. We are constantly searching and striving to attain that bond with someone with out fully understanding the components involved in making it happen. In a time of serial monogamy, marriage drive thrus, and quickie divorces, we don't have much incentive to invest that sort of time. Relationships are easy to get out of. But in order to have a successful relationship, both parties must first actively communicate their intentions of what they are hoping to gain from the relationship, concerns, and hopes for themselves as individuals and as a collective. Failure to do this would surely be the demise of any relationship.

There are many instances in the short stories in which I have read where two characters are unable to grasp the concept in which I am putting forth. A prime example would be Miss Dent and Mr. Blake from John Cheever's "The Five-Forty-Eight." In this story, Miss Dent and Mr. Blake start with a working relationship which escalates into a one night stand. Neither character has communicated what their intentions or hopes for this encounter is. Miss Dent is coming from the angle that she cares for this person, and would like something more from this affair. She articulates this to him later saying "All I wanted was a little love." Had she addressed this in the beginning, it would have been clear what her hopes were for this relationship. Mr. Blake however was coming from the exact opposite angle: "She gave him a drink and said that she was going to put on something more comfortable. He urged her to; that was he came for." If these people were openly communicating their intentions to each other would have been clear therefore enabling them to make an informed decision.

Another example of a successful relationship from the short stories I have read is character Nanapush and his young friend Eli from Louise Edrich's "Matchimanito." Eli frequently came to Nanapush for advice on hunting, women, and life in general. It was clear to Nanapush what Eli's intentions were, as Eli communicated it frequently with his barrage of questions. "I'm a Nanapush remember. That's as good as saying I knew what interested Eli Kashpaw. He wanted something other than what I could teach him about the woods." This relationship worked because both parties were upfront in their intentions and needs. They each gave and took from the relationship in a way that they felt they were both being fulfilled.

We all want successful relationships. The previously mentioned characters wanted successful relationships in one way or another. Whether its Miss Dent's quest for love or Eli trying to gain Nanapush's knowledge, it is only human to want that bond. But in order to accomplish that, we need keep the lines of communication open and be clear on what we want out of the exchange.

