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Crucial Building Block

Communication. A word that represents a crucial building block in establishing relationships with those people hold closest. Without communication there would not be a way of understanding one another, nor there a way to express what a person feels during a life altering moment. The absence of communication in a relationship can make or break the bond between people and it is in Franz Kafka's novella, The Metamorphosis, that readers witness the effects in a relationship from the dearth of communication.

#1:

“Gregor, Gregor’, he called, ‘what’s wrong?’ And after a short while he called again with a warning deepness in his voice: ‘Gregor! Gregor!’ At the other side door his sister came plaintively: ‘Gregor? Aren’t you well? Do you need anything?’” (Kafka 6).

Any person—especially family members—would become concerned if there was a change in a daily routine; in this situation it is where Gregor's family begins to express their concern when he misses the early train for work. The dialogue from above displays Gregor's father and sister as nurturing family members by placing his father at his bedroom door and his sister “at the other side door” (Kafka 6) to show he is surrounded by nurturing family, but in all reality they aren't. His family isn't all that concerned about how he is, they are only concerned

about why the supporter of the family missed work—which is one key point that readers will discover as they read father in the novella. Although Gregor’s family became concerned due to him being the only one who works, their first priority was to communicate with him by simply asking him “what’s wrong?” and “Aren’t you well?” (Kafka 6). The act of communicating between Gregor and his family is what holds their relationship together; to look at it a different way is like a piece of tape holding together a paper torn in half. Gregor’s relationship with his family is put to the test when they have to adapt to having a bug as a brother and son; that’s where communication between one another is essential, but they neglect it when they discover Gregor is unable to respond with them. Without the ability to communication, Gregor is compelled to experience the disconnection from his family for the rest of the novella.

Kafka constructs an anxious tone to part one of The Metamorphosis with the use of the passage displayed above. He has Gregor’s father shout “Gregor! Gregor!” (Kafka 6) twice to express the worry arising in the household and has his sister ask quick and brief questions to create an unease mood—resulting in an anxious feeling. Pin pointing and understanding the tone is vital because it will help readers grasp a better understanding of how communication between Gregor and his family change the overall feeling of the novella.

#2:

“Father, Mother”, said his sister, hitting the table with her hand as introduction, ‘we can’t carry on like this. Maybe you can’t see it, but I can. I don’t want to call this monster my brother, all I can say is: we have to try and get rid of it...’

‘She’s absolutely right’, said Gregor’s father to himself.” (Kafka 46-47).

A moment of a hand hitting a table is all that it takes for a turning point in The Metamorphosis. The passage above represents how a relationship can change when communication isn’t involved. With no interaction with each other, Gregor is dehumanized by his sister with the use of a one word: it. The relationship that lead his family to be concerned no longer exist after days and months of silence. No communication resulted in the disappearance of a relationship. This is a vital passage because it reveals the effects from dearth of communication and how it can make or break a relationship.

Communication is an essential building block for establishing relationships in literature and in the real world. Everyday people communicate with each other to express feelings, ideas, or to simply ask how one’s day is going. Without communication everyone would be surrounded in silence and there wouldn’t be a difference between humans and other animals; that is where Kafka’s The Metamorphosis is a great example that shows how important communication is.

Works Cited

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. Simon & Brown, 2010. Print.