

ROLLER COASTER RIDE IN LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT: ABCDE STAGE OF RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract

Literature and life are closely intervened. It is the manifestation of the actualities of human survival and wellbeing. The accountability of human survival is subjected to relationships. The interpersonal relationship exists among two or more people. Perhaps it is inevitable in this modern world and nobody can escape from experiencing the same during their life span. This relationship tries to bring in greater affiliations among various kinds of people wherein this relationship may result in both healthy as well as unhealthy atmosphere. The relationship diverges in developing different levels of intimacy, affiliations, bonding, etc., for different people. This fosters various benefits in humans like developing confidence, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, kindling greater inspiration, fighting loneliness, etc. This paper tries to analyze the interpersonal relationship of the fictional character Ankita Sharma, who is in her stage of adolescence, under the lens of the ABCDE stage of relationship by the psychologist George Levinger.

Keywords

Interpersonal relationship, intimacy, catastrophe, reinforcement

Introduction

Commonly, the interpersonal relationship falls under the categories namely family relationship, relationship with friends, romantic relationships, etc. Intimacy with a family member is one of the inevitable forms of relationship for most people, which in turn helps in acquiring the basic values of human existence — indeed the most essential form of human civilization. In regards to relationship, Frieder R. Lang and Karen L. Fingerman (2004, p.3) express their view as “family and friendships, peripheral and intimate ties, short-term and long- term relationships, threaded together in different configurations at different points in life” (3).

Objectives

- To explore the ill effects of the adolescent relationship of the protagonist Ankita Sharma
- To analyze the various stages of Ankita Sharma's relationship through the lens of ABCDE stage of relationship by George Levinger

Discussion

Relationship with friends promotes self-confidence, self-esteem, etc. The physical and emotional bonding may result in the romantic relationship among human beings. At a point in time, when an individual feels that the other person will be a significant part of his or her life, they get into a romantic relationship. Anita L. Vangelisti (2012, p. 597) opines on the importance of interpersonal relationship as “Interpersonal communication is central to romantic relationships”.

Several issues find their role in strengthening or weakening relationships amongst them. As they mature, the relationship undergoes several stages. Jeffrey S. Nevid & Spencer A. Rathus (2010, p. 383) quoted (Dindia & Timmerman, 2003) “Like individuals, relationships undergo different stages of development”. This paper use Levinger’s model as a framework for exploring the factors that contribute to strengthening or weakening the relationship of the fictional character Ankita Sharma during her stage of adolescence.

George Levinger was born in 1927 in Germany. He was a professor in psychology at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. His work concerns interpersonal relationships. The psychologist George Levinger proposed the most significant model of relationship development (ABCDE stages) comprising of five stages namely Acquaintance, Buildup, Continuation, Deterioration, and Ending for the analysis of the interpersonal relationship. Jeffrey S. Nevid & Spencer A. Rathus (2010, p. 383) put forth their view on the psychology and life challenges by quoting Levinger’s view as,

The sociologist George Levinger proposed a guiding conceptual model of relationship changes. This model, called the ABCDE model, describes the life cycle of romantic relationships in terms of five stages of development: attraction, building, continuation, deterioration, and ending.

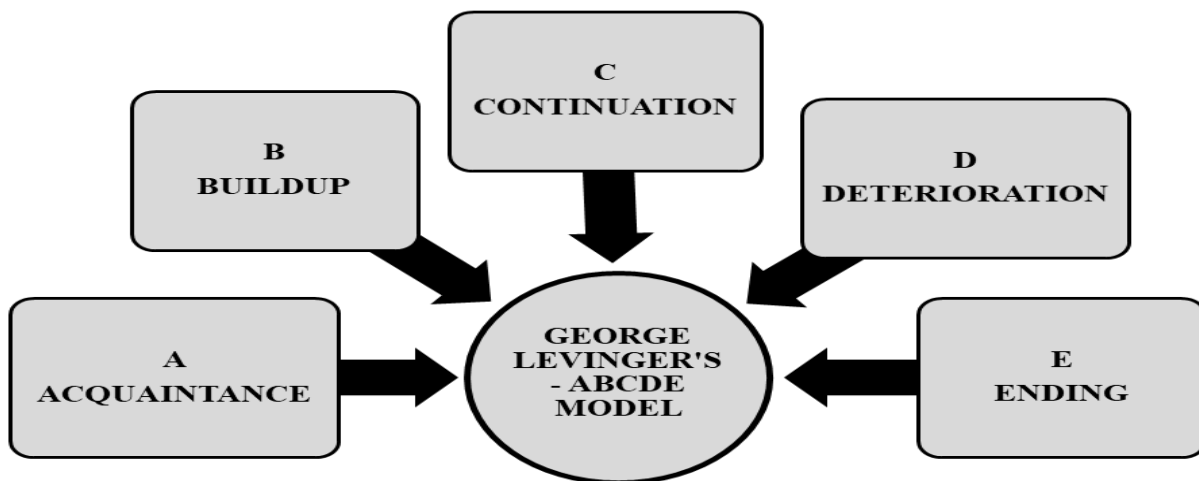


Figure 1: ADOPTED FROM GEORGE LEVINGER'S ABCDE STAGE OF RELATIONSHIP

First Stage: Acquaintance/ Attraction

This is an early stage in relationship development. During this stage, people from different backgrounds will become aware of each other. This first stage begins after identifying a new personality in a crowd or group either accidentally or by chance. In this fiction, the protagonist Ankita Sharma experiences George Levinger's first stage of relationship development during the cultural fest in Kerala. "It was at Symphony that year that Sanjana introduced me to Abhishek, Dhiren, and Christy" (22). Ankita Sharma happens to meet them during the symphony and their meeting creates a great passion and liking for each other.

Second Stage: Buildup

In this stage, the relationship becomes so intense. It involves more sharing and caring for each other. Ankita Sharma too experiences George Levinger's second stage of relationship development in the hands of Abhishek. As a result of the first stage of relationship development, both Ankita Sharma and Abhishek try to get along with each other in their second stage of the relationship. The care and affection for each other increases tremendously as a result of it they try to meet each other to spend quality time. They share their likes and opinions in creating a strong bond. Abhishek expresses his close observation and his liking for Ankita in the following words exemplifies their relationship to the readers,

I love the way you speak, the way you smile, and the way you are so easily shocked. I love the enthusiasm you have and how you think that you have to do it all. I love the way you come up with repartees and you work so hard to make things happen. I loved the way you wanted me on the bike to behave myself. I love your spirit and the way you spoke. . . I admire your courage to go up on the stage. (36)

Third Stage: Continuation

This stage depends on commitment and trust among the people involved. People may experience a corresponding amount of influence on each other. Wherein, they strive hard with an increased amount of effort in maintaining the relationship to meet the challenges and the obstacles in their path with utmost care. This stage requires mutual trust amongst each other in maintaining or continuing the relationship. Ankita Sharma continues her relationship with Abhi through a secret phone call as well as through a secret visit to his house. Ankita Sharma's reaction and her behavior could picture the Influence of Abhi in the minds of the protagonist Ankita. During her phone call, she enjoys her time and she wishes to prolong the eagerness of Abhi and his anticipation. She agrees to meet him and she also creates a great trust factor for Abhi in continuing their relationship by agreeing to meet him at his house. She says " I'll meet you on Saturday afternoon at 3" (40).

Fourth Stage: Deterioration

Worsening the bond may not be applicable in all the relationship. Nevertheless, it happens under various circumstances due to varied reasons. In general, boredom, loss of trust, dissatisfaction, lack of hope, failure in communication, change in atmosphere, proximity, etc. are some of the major factors for creating deterioration in relationships. Here in this fiction, *Life Is What You Make It*, Ankita Sharma's and Abhi's relationship deteriorates because of the handiness

of alternatives and jealousy. Both Ankita Sharma and Abhi are interested in doing MBA as their master's degree. Ankita succeeds to get into a premier management school for her higher studies whereas, Abhi fails. When Ankita expresses her intention of relocating to Bombay for her studies, Abhi could not tolerate it. Ankita's feelings and thoughts towards Abhi's reaction are evident for the readers in understanding the problem in their relationship. She feels,

Later I thought about what Abhi had said. I concluded he was frustrated and jealous as he had not made it. How could he ask me to give up my dream? How could he ask me to give up something I had worked so hard for, just so I could be with him? . . . I did not feel any regret. (68-69)

Fifth Stage: Ending

The final phase in the stage of the relationship is ending. This may occur due to death, separation, breakup, etc. In the case of Ankita Sharma and Abhi's relationship, the reason for the ending of their relationship is death. As Abhi could not tolerate the separation and her relocation to Bombay for her higher studies, as a result, he ends his life by committing suicide.

Eventually, the life travel of Ankita ends in creating a great catastrophe in her lifetime. Being unable to tolerate the pain, she sinks into depression, more scientifically bipolar depression. The analysis of Ankita's life journey through the lens of George Levinger's - ABCDE Model of relationship helps in awakening the society for better life perception and understanding human relationships.

Conclusion

Preeti Shenoy — who writes with a keen observant mind — brings to the readers the devastation behind the roller coaster life of the protagonist Ankita Sharma. By exploring the desolation of the fictional character Ankita Sharma, Preeti Shenoy intends to educate the readers about the intensity of maintaining a good relationship. Thus by exploring more about the reasons that reinforce or deteriorate relationships may help us develop more satisfying and lasting relationships.

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