

Frederick Douglass

Since Frederick Douglass never had anyone in his childhood who would show him any bit of kindness, he closed himself off and did not even know such a thing existed before he experienced it. He met his mother only a few times and he was so young, he didn't really remember it. And his grandmother took care of so many other children that he did not see her as a proper part of his family. So when Douglass came to live with Hugh and Sophia Auld and they showed him what it is like to be treated with kindness and sympathy, it is not surprising he considered them as something close to father and mother figures. He especially liked Sophia because of her gentle heart and her willingness to teach him to read. But it didn't last very long because the power of owning a slave corrupted Sophia and Mr Auld soon began drinking. But he wasn't totally unhappy in Baltimore. He formed very close friendships with the little white boys who he asked to teach him to read and write. It would seem like he was only using them but he liked them because they didn't treat him as an inferior slave but as just another little boy who simply wanted to talk to them and be friends. At the end of his stay in Baltimore, he probably considered them as something close to brothers, since he said they were the people he would miss the most when he left (not the Aulds anymore).

But the people who might be qualified as the closest to him were the fellow slaves he met when he came to serve his new master, Mr Freeland. The foundation of their relationships was built on the fact that they were all like-minded people who loved to learn. Douglass began teaching them to read and the word spread amongst the slaves fast and soon he was secretly teaching dozens of slaves. But only a few were his close friends. They loved and appreciated each other, never made any decision without consulting the others. And so Douglass slowly started telling them about the abolitionist movement and the inhumanity of slavery and he realized they agreed with him. And in planning their escape and dreaming of the same things, their relationships became even stronger. Unfortunately, they got separated

after someone betrayed them, but he still thought very highly of them afterwards. Although they spent only a year together, due to their same mindset and determination to educate themselves, they were as close as brothers.

Then, of course, when he became a free man, he married Anna Murray, which helped him with settling down and finally feeling at home. And he also had a very good relationship with Nathan Johnson, who helped him with everything when he and Anna came to Massachusetts. They were not exactly family relationships, but they were as important to him as if they were. Douglass finally knew what it was to be a free man with the love and respect he got from the people around him.

All in all, Frederick Douglass managed to free himself of the slave's mindset that he would never be treated with respect when he learned that we could have a free future if he educated himself. Since then, he formed close relationships with people who treated him as an equal and showed him kindness. Nowadays it does not seem like a good enough reason to be friends with someone. But for him, starved of any bit of love, it was enough. But as he believed in himself more and more, his standards got higher, and he formed real, meaningful relationships with people. But they were still different to a free white man's relationships because he lived through too much and it altered him in a way, that someone who has not lived through it all would never understand.