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Frederick Douglass, an American Slave

Any kind of enchainment, physical or psychological, takes away many freedoms and possibilities from the chained person. Slavery is the kind of imprisonment which captures both person's body and mind. Frederick Douglass' narrative about experiencing slavery on his own skin, shows how this type of imprisonment stops slaves from forming and maintaining any kind of genuine and close relationship, be that family or a friend. Furthermore, Frederick thoroughly exemplifies the inability to progress, prosper, and succeed under a slave-master's constant surveillance and violently-invoked obedience.

Separation from the mother during infancy is the first occasion where slavery forbade bonding between parents and their children. It has led to zero attachment to his mother, meanwhile his father officially remained unknown, therefore, non-existent. Frederick's childhood development was mainly supported by his grandmother, Betsy Bailey, who served as replacement for his parents, and who was the only person he formed any attachment to at the early age. However, after he was taken away from his grandmother, Frederick is left with the option to look for people who could replace the absence of his parents.

First person upon whom Frederick comes across – suitable for a father-figure – is master Daniel Lloyd. Master develops certain sympathies towards Frederick, by sharing his food with him and defending him from bullies, which made him his provider and protector. Second person whom Frederick meets is Mrs. Auld, for whom his first impression was that she is the kindest and the most welcoming woman he has ever met. Considering that he was still a kid when he arrived to their house, Mrs. Auld didn't really treat him as a slave, but

rather as an adopted child. Thus, she proceeds in teaching him the alphabet and how to read, until Mr. Auld points out Frederick's position of non-privilege in learning anything that could give him the opportunity to become more than a slave. After this event, Frederick realizes the harsh truth of slavery, that it is not just the physical bondage, but also mental.

Mr. Auld's statement had the opposite effect on Frederick than on Mrs. Auld. She stops teaching Frederick, yet he realizes that learning to read and write, and with it, learning more things will be his ticket to freedom, far away from slavery. However, this motivation to learn turned out not be just an opportunity for freedom, but also an indirect, accidental tool for forming successful relationships in his life. He failed to bond with any potential parental figure, yet in the process of learning, he starts to make friends, who will serve as the siblings he was separated from during early childhood. Firstly, he meets a group of white boys in Baltimore, with whom he practices writing and reading. They become his friends, his companions, and as he will be leaving Baltimore, distancing from them will be the only thing that he will regret about his departure.

Few years later, Frederick discovers that his fellow-slaves are just as eager to learn as he was. This discovery leads to him forming a Sabbath-school, in order to share his knowledge and skills with them. Despite the risk and the possibility of severe punishment, if their gatherings were to be discovered, they kept coming to Frederick's classes. The determination and the mutual will to learn has bonded them all, and Frederick has finally succeeded in forming proper relationships with people. He became a part of a group of people with same interests and desires, which further encourages him to try and pursue freedom, in which he was joined by his friends Henry Harris, John Harris, Henry Bailey, Charles Roberts.

Regardless of the failure of their pursuit, the companions remained together, even in prison, until they were forced to separate. However, even after the separation, the bond was too strong to break, they remained friends and Frederick's feelings of closeness and love for

them have persisted even in the following years, when he does succeed to escape slavery. In this new, free chapter of Frederick's life, he gains a new companion by getting married with Anna, a girl he has made an acquaintance of earlier in life. Frederick has succeeded in achieving the goal he was striving towards since he was a little boy. Nevertheless, the true success didn't lie in the in the freedom he got, but in the bonds and relationships he formed on the way to it. He has formed bonds with people who have experienced the same torment and the same hopes and fears as he has, and they have created a companionship, which can never be taken away from any of them.

Physical freedom is the most obvious goal a slave could have. However, slavery takes away much more from them, it takes away their opportunities, their hopes, their desires, their bonds with family. Frederick Douglass is no exception, he suffers the complete lack of parental relationships, and although he does meet few people who could be good parental role-models, the attachment is not present, and the bond is short-term. The pursuit of freedom brings Frederick more than he ever hoped for. With the years passing by during his slavery, he encounters many other slaves, and with each acquaintance he realizes that they all have the same dreams and goals as him. At the end, freedom was not the main success Frederick achieved. He has become free, but it was the relationships he formed with people throughout both slavery and freedom that were the most valuable achievement.