

## **Love is All Around – Response to *The Last Knit***

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**ABSTRACT:** *This video clip, which showcased how persistent, or extreme, the protagonist lady is, left a deep impression on me. It left me pondering the reasons behind her attitude, and one of the most plausible explanations that I was able to think of is that she is a brave mother, who is willing to spare her life for her child to have a warm scarf. Granted, she is desperate. However, I would rather call her “brave” and I believe that happiness and love filled her heart while she was knitting.*

**KEYWORDS:** love, all around, response, last knit

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Love Makes One Brave**

This video clip, which showcased how persistent, or extreme, the protagonist lady is, left a deep impression on me. It left me pondering the reasons behind her attitude, and one of the most plausible explanations that I was able to think of is that she is a brave mother, who is willing to spare her life for her child to have a warm scarf. Granted, she is desperate. However, I would rather call her “brave” and I believe that happiness and love filled her heart while she was knitting.

Such courage is not rarely found in parents. I remember when I went to swim in a local water dam, where my mother put me in a life buoy and allowed me to play in the water. However, a current pushed me to the downstream, as there was a gap in the dam that increased the water flow. I wasn't able to control the direction of the life buoy any more, and to save me, my mother plunged into the water and rushed to drag me against the current flow. She felt my body trembling and comforted me that we were safe. I didn't realize that she had bruises on her knees until we were out of the water, and she didn't even bother wiping out the blood on her knees as the first thing she did was to check whether I had any injury. Throughout my childhood, I never pictured my mother as a brave person because my father was the one who would shoulder family responsibilities, and strive to improve our quality of living, so this accident completely overthrew my impression of her.

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After watching *The Last Knit* video clip, I was reminded of me of what happened in my childhood and my association of these two behaviors makes sense in the end, as mom's bravery comes out of love.

However, I also felt deeply sorry for what happened in the video clip because it left me to contemplate what the right amount of love to give is.

## **APPROPRIATE LOVE**

This mother used every material within her reach to weave the scarf, including piles of yarn, and own hair. I was delighted to see that the scarf was half done, before turning puzzled because the scarf became long beyond what could be worn. The lady worked frantically and seemed to lose track of why she started knitting in the first place. Her efforts can be considered as the act of "giving love", but disregarded whether this "love" is appropriate or can be easily accepted or not.

So now the question boils down to what the appropriate amount of love is. For something to be categorized into "appropriate amount", I believe 3 dimensions should be taken into consideration.

*First of all, the subject matter should be considered.* Due to the age, cultural, gender, occupation differences, people vary from each other. We should respect such differences by taking the subject matter into account. A newborn baby might see the milk bottle as a symbol of love, but a teenager will see respect for their privacy as love. The lady wove a long scarf, and it became too long to be wearable. I believe this is ignorance of the subject matter, as the subject of her love would only need a normal length scarf to live through a harsh winter.

*Second, a portion of love should be reserved to love oneself.* I could vividly recall the line written by Irish poet Roy (1936), "I love you, not only for what you are, but for what I am when I am with you". The best way to love is to express it without losing self-consciousness. In other words, both parties should be a better version of themselves for love to be meaningful and "appropriate".

*Third, love should not exceed one's affordability.* While the lady had knitting balls by her side, it made sense for her to use them up, but towards the end, she started using her own hair and tried to give what she could not afford. Cases as such are not rare in China, when children request toys, phones, or other material items that eventually exceeded their parents can afford. Because some parents never learned to say no, children's' appetite can grow exponentially. Expectedly, stories as such never come with a happy ending.

What also baffled me was that the lady knitted for hours, but nobody came to help. She fell off the cliff but only managed to climb back on her own. Where is her son or

daughter? Why is nobody helping her? I see a tenacious mother in the video clip, but more importantly, I see its more pathetic aspect, which is that no family member or children approached her to help. Children might get used to receiving love and care from parents, but don't learn how to love back. Love should be reciprocated, and I firmly believe that lady should attach a value to her love. A child would not have the ability of loving others if he has never received love; however, he would also not learn how to love others if he is accustomed to receiving love without giving back.

I understand that making an assumption that the mother is spoiling her baby can be bold, especially when her tenacity is admirable. However, I would like to step beyond the known plot and make the guess that she was spoiling her baby with tremendous personal sacrifices. In China, many students who have passed the age of adulthood behave like children or teenagers, because they have undivided attention from not only their parents, but also grandparents. In a nucleus family, the grandson is seen as the core of the family and is highly valued. They can obtain whatever they want whenever they want it; no matter how inconvenient or pricey it is for the family to satisfy his insatiable thirst for products or services, they would try hard to meet the boy's needs. On the one hand, such devotion makes it too easy for the boy to obtain what he wants, and so he may have no clue of how hard it is for the family to get it. On the other hand, the devotion comes with parents' notion that the son should be obedient to their command. The parents' belief, "I have sacrificed my work, time to fulfil my son's goal, so he should listen to me and follow my instructions," is simple but not rare among Chinese families. Such ideas can be daunting because the boy is perceived as a "thing" instead of a person who has their own thoughts and individual character. But the parents' rationale is easy to understand, they think there should be a price for their sacrifice and they need to see a tangible outcome from their efforts, meaning that their children "have to" outperform others and excel. In order to fulfil such a goal, it is vital for the children to follow their designed trajectory and thus, obedience is expected in return for the parents' devotion.

I firmly believe that for a family to function there needs to be a balance in the relationship, be it between parents and children or wife and husband. To maintain a balance or a perfect relationship, sacrifice and help should be appreciated. We should not take things for granted, or it would break the balance. Those who are sacrificing should also ask a "reward" if they fail to obtain it at the beginning. Especially in the mother-and-son case, mother services as a contributor, as well as an educator. Without mother's inculcation of an appreciative attitude towards favor, it is difficult for a child to be aware of it.

## **THE SCARF IS LOST, BUT LOVE REMAINS**

By the end of the video clip, the lady in the video finally used up all the material that she could use to weave the scarf, but to remain steady on the edge of the cliff, she has to keep pulling. Finally, she fell off the cliff. The reversal point of the story was that to

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my surprise, the lady climbed back and threw away the knitting sticks, and abandoned her hair for survival. It took so long for her to knit that I am convinced that abandoning the scarf that she made with so much effort was a difficult choice. On the other hand, I understand that even though the scarf was lost, she would not feel regretful or heart-breaking. Because what matters is that her love remains.

Seeing a tangible outcome for every effort one has paid might be implausible, but what matters is the process of trying and the firm belief that illuminates one's path. In this video clip, her belief is love. That is why I like this video so much.

### **Disclosure Statement**

The author declares that she has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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