

# *The Dressmaker of Khair Khana* and *The First Year: How To Be Successful With a Blank Slate*

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## Learning Objectives:

1. The notion of starting with nothing and working your way to success
2. The benefit of working with others and having a sense of community
3. The importance of perseverance

## Activity #1: Discuss the content of the novel

Length: 5 min

General Description: With the students having already read the book, have a class discussion about their thoughts and feelings about the book.

### Processing Questions:

- What did you think of the book?
- What were some of the obstacles that Kamila and her sister faced? How do you think you would have dealt with those situations?
- What were some of the things that Kamila and her sisters did that allowed them to be successful?
- For the Girls: How would you feel about having to wear a chadri in public?
- For the Boys: How would you deal with the women's situation?

Transition Notes: Now that we have discussed a little about the book, we will now work on an activity to further our understanding.

## Activity #2: Values Activity

Length: 10 min

General Description: Students will engage in an activity to showcase them the importance of building a support system, as well as "making lemonade out of lemons".

### Instructions:

- Have each student write down five of the most important things in their lives. Examples of these include family, friends, freedom, music, food, school, sports, their pets, etc.
- Now have them write down 5 more things that they think will allow them to be successful in college. Examples of these are a great advisor, tutoring, a support system, an effective study schedule, etc.

- Now that they have their list of 10 items, tell the students to imagine that these 10 items are the only things they will have with them as they go through college. Everything else is obsolete.
- Next, tell them that they have to eliminate the one item from their list that they find the least important. Keep in mind that should try to keep a balance of success and happiness. Have them eliminate one item, one by one, until they are left with their 2 most important items.
- At this time announce to the class that they can pair up with another student to combine their lists. So each student should be sharing a set of 4 items with another student.
- With their four items, have the pair of students brainstorm as to the different possibilities their items could create. For example, if the students have listed Family and a Phone, they could in essence have family, friends, and a support system.

Transition Notes: Briefly wrap up activity and go straight into the discussion of what just took place.

Activity #3: Discuss how the book relates to being a college freshman

Length: 10 min

General Description: The students will discuss the similarities they see in both their own lives as starting freshmen, and Kamila's life

Processing Questions:

- How did it make you feel in the activity when you had to get rid of things that you held close to your heart?
- Were any of you relieved when you got the chance to pair up with another student? Kamila's support system was a big reason why she was so successful. Do any of you see the need to build your own support system here at UF?
- As a you enter into college as freshmen, you are a blank slate. After all that hard work in high school, you are now back at the bottom of the totem pole. How has The Dressmaker of Khair Khana taught you that, while being freshmen in college may not have the same prestige associated with seniors in high school/college, it in no way means that you can't be successful?
- What insight can you gain as a freshman from reading the novel?
- Do you see any similarities in your own life and in Kamila's? Any differences?
- Going back to the question about what Kamila did to be successful. What can you do to be successful in your time here at The University of Florida?