

# Love and Learning: Finding Balance Between Relationship and Academic Excellence

Chandrasekhar Bhoi

Assistant Professor (TE) in Botany  
M.P.C. Autonomous College, Baripada, India

Email- [cbhoi7918@gmail.com](mailto:cbhoi7918@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Navigating the demands of a relationship while striving for academic excellence presents unique challenges for students. Both love and learning require significant emotional and mental investment, and achieving a balance between the two can influence personal well-being, academic performance, and relationship satisfaction. This article explores the dynamics between relationships and academic success, offering strategies to maintain harmony between the two important aspects of a student's life. Research suggests that a healthy, supportive relationship can positively impact academic motivation and emotional stability. However, when poorly managed, relationships can also become a source of distraction, stress, and academic decline. Time management, communication, and setting boundaries emerge as key factors in ensuring that neither academic goals nor relationship needs are compromised. This article delves into the importance of prioritizing self-care and maintaining a strong support system, emphasizing that balance does not mean equal time for both, but rather an adaptive approach to managing responsibilities based on personal and academic needs. By analyzing case studies and expert advice, we offer insights into how students can foster positive relationships while excelling academically. Ultimately, finding a balance between love and learning involves mutual understanding, goal alignment, and the ability to recognize when adjustments are needed. By developing a framework that promotes both personal and academic growth, students can cultivate a fulfilling relationship and achieve their educational aspirations simultaneously.

**Keywords:** Love and learning, Academic excellence, Relationships, Time management, Emotional stability, Stress management

## Introduction

Love and Learning: A Complex Balance For many students, college or university life is not just a period of academic learning; it is also a time for emotional growth, self-discovery, and the formation of deep relationships. Love, in its many forms—whether romantic or platonic—plays an important role in shaping an individual's experience during these formative years (Klue 2023). However, the demands of academic life can often clash with the emotional needs of a relationship. Late-night study sessions, exams, assignments, and academic stress can leave little room for nurturing a relationship, leading to conflict, stress, and a sense of imbalance.

At the same time, a healthy, supportive relationship can serve as a source of motivation, emotional stability, and personal growth. For students, the challenge is in finding ways to excel academically while maintaining the emotional commitment necessary for a fulfilling relationship (Posner 2009). This article explores the strategies for achieving this balance, emphasizing that it is possible to thrive in both love and learning with the right approach.

## The Role of Relationships in Student Life

### Relationships and Emotional Well-Being:

Human beings are social creatures, and relationships form the foundation of emotional well-being. During student life, relationships—whether romantic or friendships—can significantly impact mental health and overall happiness. A positive relationship can provide emotional support during stressful times, serve as a source of motivation, and enhance self-esteem (Petrelli 2018). Studies have shown that students in healthy relationships often experience higher levels of life satisfaction and emotional stability, which can positively influence their academic performance.

However, not all relationships have a positive effect. Unhealthy or toxic relationships, characterized by conflict, lack of communication, or emotional manipulation, can become a significant source of stress. Such relationships can detract from academic focus and lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and burnout. Therefore, the quality of the relationship matters just as much as the ability to balance time and energy between personal and academic commitments.

## Academic Excellence: A Primary Goal

### The Pressures of Academic Achievement:

For many students, academic excellence is a primary goal. Achieving high grades, excelling in extracurricular activities, and preparing for future careers all require substantial time and effort. Academic success is often viewed as a stepping stone to future opportunities, and the pressure to perform well can be intense. With rising expectations from family, society, and personal ambition,

students often feel the need to dedicate significant portions of their time to studying, attending classes, and engaging in academic-related activities. However, focusing solely on academics without allowing time for personal growth, social connections, and emotional well-being can lead to burnout (Whitney & Hirsch 2007). It's crucial for students to understand that academic success should not come at the expense of their mental health or relationships. Striking a balance between academic and personal life is key to long-term success and happiness.

## **The Dynamics Between Love and Learning**

### **Challenges in Balancing Relationships and Academics:**

Balancing a relationship while striving for academic excellence presents several challenges, such as time management, emotional energy, and prioritization. Students often struggle with managing their time effectively when faced with conflicting demands—spending time with a partner versus completing assignments, preparing for exams, or attending classes.

Additionally, emotional energy plays a significant role. Relationships require emotional investment, and managing the ups and downs of a romantic relationship can sometimes leave students feeling emotionally drained, which can affect their focus on academic (Salleh & Hashim 2017). On the other hand, academic stress can spill over into personal relationships, leading to misunderstandings or tension between partners.

Moreover, the challenge of prioritization often arises when students are faced with making decisions about how to allocate their time and energy. It can be difficult to decide whether to prioritize a relationship event, such as a partner's birthday, over an important academic deadline or exam. These decisions require careful thought and often lead to feelings of guilt or stress when one aspect is temporarily neglected.

### **Time Management: A Critical Skill :**

Time management is perhaps the most important skill for balancing relationships and academics. Developing the ability to allocate time efficiently between personal commitments and academic responsibilities can make the difference between feeling overwhelmed and maintaining a healthy balance.

One effective strategy for managing time is creating a schedule that accounts for both academic and personal time. By setting specific times for studying, attending classes, and completing assignments, students can ensure that they meet their academic responsibilities without feeling that their relationship is being neglected (Burke et al. 2024). Additionally, setting aside dedicated time for the relationship—such as a weekly date night or scheduled downtime with a partner—helps maintain the emotional connection without interfering with academic progress.

## **Communication**

### **Key to Relationship Success:**

Open and honest communication is essential for maintaining a healthy relationship, particularly when both partners are students dealing with academic pressures. Clear communication helps partners understand each other's needs, academic schedules, and emotional states. For example, discussing deadlines or upcoming exams with a partner in advance can help set expectations about the time and energy available for the relationship during particularly stressful academic periods (Maatta & Uusiautti 2012).

Moreover, communication allows partners to express their feelings and concerns openly, which can prevent misunderstandings and build a stronger emotional foundation. When both partners understand the challenges of balancing love and learning, they are more likely to offer support and be patient during high-stress academic periods.

### **Setting Boundaries:**

Setting boundaries is another critical aspect of maintaining balance. Boundaries help students define the limits of their time and emotional energy, ensuring that both academic and relationship needs are respected. For instance, setting boundaries around study time—such as committing to undisturbed focus for a few hours each day—can help students stay on top of their academic work while also being available for their partner during other times.

Similarly, boundaries in the relationship can prevent academic distractions. Partners need to understand that during exam periods or critical academic deadlines, the student's focus may need to shift primarily to their studies. Respecting these boundaries prevents feelings of neglect and ensures that both aspects of life are given the necessary attention.

## **The Positive Impact of Relationships on Academic Performance**

### **Support Systems and Emotional Stability:**

A supportive relationship can have a profoundly positive impact on academic performance. Research has shown that students in healthy relationships often feel more motivated and emotionally supported, which can enhance their ability to focus on their studies (Dhungana 2020). A partner who understands the importance of academic goals and offers emotional support can help alleviate stress, providing a safe space for relaxation and recovery during demanding academic periods.

Furthermore, relationships can act as a buffer against the stresses of academic life. Knowing that there is someone who genuinely cares and is invested in one's emotional well-being can significantly improve a student's ability to manage academic pressure. Emotional stability leads to better concentration, improved memory, and a greater capacity to cope with the challenges of academic life.

### **Goal Alignment and Mutual Support:**

Another important aspect of balancing relationships and academic pursuits is goal alignment. When both partners have aligned goals—whether related to academic achievement, career aspirations, or personal development—it becomes easier to support each other. Mutual understanding and shared goals foster a sense of teamwork, where both partners are invested in each other's success.

For example, if both partners are students, they may schedule study sessions together or support each other during exams. In such cases, the relationship becomes a source of strength rather than a distraction, as both partners understand the importance of academic success and are committed to helping each other achieve it.

### **The Risks of an Imbalanced Approach**

#### **Academic Decline Due to Relationship Distractions:**

While a healthy relationship can positively impact academic performance, an imbalanced approach to love and learning can have detrimental effects. Students who prioritize their relationship over academics to the point where they neglect their studies may experience a decline in academic performance. This can lead to stress, frustration, and guilt, ultimately harming both the relationship and the student's academic future. Distractions caused by constant communication, frequent meetups, or emotional drama can derail a student's focus and productivity (Cannizzo 2018). When a relationship becomes the primary focus at the expense of academic responsibilities, it can lead to missed deadlines, poor grades, and even academic probation.

#### **Relationship Strain Due to Academic Stress:**

Conversely, an overemphasis on academics without giving the relationship the necessary attention can strain even the healthiest of partnerships. When one partner feels neglected or undervalued due to the other's intense focus on academic responsibilities, frustration and resentment may build. This sense of emotional distance can lead to conflict, as the partner who feels sidelined may interpret the lack of attention as a sign of disinterest or diminished affection. Unaddressed, these feelings can erode the trust and emotional connection that are fundamental to a strong relationship. This strain often creates a cycle of stress. As the relationship becomes more tense, the emotional strain on both partners increases, further exacerbating stress levels. For the student, this added pressure can lead to feelings of guilt, distraction, and mental exhaustion, all of which can detract from academic focus. As academic performance begins to suffer, the student's stress intensifies, adding more pressure on the relationship and perpetuating the cycle. It is essential for students to recognize that relationships, like academic success, require effort and intentionality.

Finding the right balance between academics and relationships involves effective communication, mutual understanding, and planning. Partners must discuss their individual needs and academic demands openly, setting expectations for how they will manage their time and support one another during busy periods. Achieving this balance ensures that neither academic progress nor relationship well-being is compromised. When both partners are mindful of each other's needs and are willing to adapt their schedules or priorities, they can maintain a supportive relationship while continuing to thrive academically (Zahrin et al. 2019). Maintaining this balance promotes both academic success and relationship satisfaction, contributing to overall emotional health and long-term personal growth.

### **Strategies for Balancing Love and Learning**

#### **1. Prioritize Self-Care:**

Self-care is crucial for students striving to balance academic responsibilities with relationship commitments. Without a strong foundation of mental and physical well-being, managing both aspects of life becomes overwhelming and unsustainable. Self-care serves as the cornerstone for maintaining the energy, emotional resilience, and focus required to succeed academically while fostering

a healthy relationship. To effectively handle the pressures of both school and relationships, students must prioritize their health in several key areas:

**Regular Exercise:** Physical activity is not only beneficial for physical health but also vital for mental well-being. Exercise releases endorphins, which can improve mood and reduce stress. Regular workouts, even as short as 20 to 30 minutes a day, can help students feel more energized and focused, enabling them to tackle academic work with greater efficiency while also being present in their relationships.

**Sufficient Sleep:** Sleep is often one of the first things students sacrifice when juggling busy schedules, but it is essential for cognitive function, emotional regulation, and overall wellbeing. Chronic sleep deprivation can lead to poor academic performance, irritability, and an inability to manage the emotional complexities of a relationship. Prioritizing 7-9 hours of sleep each night ensures that students are better equipped to handle academic challenges and relationship dynamics.

**Mental Health Practices:** Practices such as meditation, mindfulness, and deep breathing exercises can greatly improve emotional stability and stress management. Mindfulness techniques encourage students to stay present and manage overwhelming thoughts, which is especially helpful during times of high academic pressure or relationship strain (Giani & O'Guinn 2010). These practices also foster a sense of calm and clarity, helping students make better decisions and communicate more effectively with their partners.

By incorporating self-care into their daily routines, students can prevent burnout, reduce stress, and maintain the emotional balance needed to excel in both their academic and personal lives

## **2. Develop Strong Time Management Skills :**

Effective time management is key to balancing academic responsibilities and personal relationships. Without proper time allocation, students may find themselves overwhelmed by competing demands, leading to stress, burnout, and potential dissatisfaction in both areas of life. Developing strong time management skills allows students to maintain focus on their academic goals while dedicating time and energy to nurturing their relationships. Creating and sticking to a well-structured schedule is one of the most effective strategies for managing time (Vincent 2016). Here are a few tips to help students improve their time management:

**Create a Balanced Schedule:** Students should design a schedule that includes dedicated time for academic work, relationship activities, and self-care. This means allocating specific time blocks for study sessions, completing assignments, and preparing for exams, while also setting aside quality time for their partner. By planning ahead, students can ensure that neither academic nor relationship obligations are neglected.

**Prioritize Tasks:** It's important to identify and prioritize tasks based on deadlines and importance. Academic tasks such as upcoming exams, papers, or group projects might require more immediate focus, while relationship time can be flexibly adjusted. Using tools such as todo lists, planners, or time management apps can help students organize their tasks and ensure that critical responsibilities are addressed first.

**Avoid Procrastination:** Procrastination is a common time management pitfall that can lead to increased stress and decreased productivity. By sticking to a schedule and avoiding last-minute cramming, students can better manage their workload and maintain a healthier balance. Breaking larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps can help prevent procrastination and keep students on track.

**Plan for Flexibility:** While a structured schedule is essential, students should also allow room for flexibility. Unexpected events—such as relationship issues, academic challenges, or health concerns—can arise. Having some flexibility built into the schedule prevents additional stress when adjustments need to be made.

**Communicate with Your Partner:** Time management isn't just about structuring academic time—it's also about ensuring open communication with a partner. Letting your partner know about critical academic deadlines or busy periods ahead of time can help manage expectations and prevent feelings of neglect or frustration (Shulman 2017). Developing strong time management skills ensures that students can stay on top of their academic work without sacrificing their relationship or self-care. A well-planned and balanced schedule reduces stress, prevents burnout, and fosters success in both personal and academic endeavors.

## **3. Set Realistic Expectations:**

Setting realistic expectations is crucial for maintaining a healthy balance between academic commitments and personal relationships. Both partners in a relationship must understand and accept that, at times, academic responsibilities will require more attention and energy. This is especially true during high-stress periods such as exam seasons, project deadlines, or intensive study weeks. By openly discussing these expectations, students can avoid misunderstandings, reduce tension, and build stronger, more supportive relationships. Here are some strategies for setting realistic expectations:

**Acknowledge Time Constraints:** Both partners need to recognize that student life often involves fluctuating schedules. There will be periods when academic work demands the majority of a student's time, leaving less room for social activities or quality time together. Acknowledging these constraints and discussing them in advance helps both partners prepare emotionally and mentally for these busy times (Griffin 2006). . This can reduce feelings of frustration or neglect during periods of academic intensity.

**Set Clear Priorities:** It's important to be clear about what takes precedence in different situations. For instance, during exam periods, academic goals should be prioritized to ensure success, while at other times, more attention can be given to the relationship. When both partners are on the same page about what is most important in specific situations, they can adjust their expectations accordingly and prevent unnecessary stress.

**Communicate Personal and Academic Goals:** Students should have honest discussions with their partners about their academic goals and how these might impact their relationship. For example, if a student is working towards a particularly challenging degree, it's essential to explain that certain semesters may involve more intense workloads. Understanding these goals allows partners to be more empathetic and supportive, rather than feeling sidelined by academic commitments.

**Be Realistic About Relationship Time:** Just as it's important to set academic goals, it's equally necessary to set realistic expectations regarding time spent together. Expecting to spend every evening together may not be feasible for a student with a heavy academic load. Instead, partners can agree on specific times during the week when they can enjoy uninterrupted time together (JonesMitchell 2020). This helps ensure that the relationship remains a priority, without compromising academic success.

**Revisit Expectations Regularly:** As academic and personal demands change, it's important for couples to regularly revisit and adjust their expectations. Academic workloads vary from semester to semester, and personal circumstances can evolve. Maintaining open lines of communication and regularly discussing changing priorities helps partners stay aligned and make necessary adjustments.

**Practice Patience and Flexibility:** Setting realistic expectations also involves practicing patience and being flexible. There may be unexpected academic challenges, last-minute study sessions, or additional workload that can affect previously set plans. Being patient and flexible allows both partners to handle these changes without unnecessary tension or disappointment( Hyland 2011). In conclusion, setting realistic expectations about time, energy, and availability is critical to ensuring that both academic and relationship goals are met. Understanding the demands of student life, communicating openly, and adjusting expectations based on current needs help prevent conflict and promote a balanced, supportive relationship.

#### **4.Communicate Openly and Frequently:**

Effective communication is the cornerstone of a healthy relationship, particularly for students striving to balance love and academic excellence. Open and honest dialogue ensures that both partners feel heard, understood, and supported, while also helping to prevent misunderstandings that can lead to conflict. When students are juggling academic pressures and relationship responsibilities, maintaining regular, clear communication becomes even more essential.

Here are several key aspects of open and frequent communication that can help students balance their relationships with academic success:

**Be Transparent About Academic Schedules and Pressures:** One of the most common sources of relationship strain for students is a lack of understanding about each other's academic workload. To avoid this, both partners should share their schedules, deadlines, and major commitments with one another. For example, discussing upcoming exams, projects, or study sessions in advance allows the partner to understand why the student might be unavailable or stressed during certain periods. This transparency reduces frustration and prevents feelings of neglect, as both partners know what to expect.

**Express Needs and Concerns Clearly:** Each person in a relationship has unique needs, whether they are emotional, physical, or logistical. Openly discussing these needs helps both partners adjust their behavior to support each other. For instance, one partner might need more alone time to focus on academics, while the other might seek more quality time to maintain emotional closeness (Vincent 2016). . By communicating these needs clearly and without judgment, both partners can make conscious efforts to meet them and avoid misunderstandings.

**Engage in Regular Check-Ins:** In the fast pace of student life, it's easy for partners to become disconnected, especially when academic pressures mount. Scheduling regular check-ins, whether daily or weekly, provides an opportunity to discuss any concerns, share updates, or simply reconnect. These conversations don't have to be long or formal—they can be as simple as asking, "How are you feeling?" or "How's your week going?" These moments of communication help maintain an emotional bond, allowing both partners to feel valued and understood.



**Discuss How to Support Each Other During Stressful Times:** When academic stress is high, it's important for partners to understand how they can be supportive. Some people may need space and time to focus on their work, while others may seek emotional comfort and encouragement. By discussing how to best support each other during these times, partners can reduce tension and be more attuned to each other's needs (Seger et al. 2023). Offering to help in small ways—like making time for a study break together or providing a listening ear—can make a significant difference in maintaining a healthy relationship.

**Practice Active Listening:** Communication is not just about talking, but also about listening. Active listening involves giving your full attention to your partner, acknowledging their feelings, and responding with empathy. When partners feel genuinely listened to, they are more likely to feel emotionally supported, even during periods of academic pressure. This practice also fosters deeper emotional connection and helps resolve potential issues before they escalate.

**Address Conflicts Early:** Small issues can easily grow into bigger problems if left unaddressed, especially when both academic and personal stress are involved. When conflicts arise, it's important to discuss them openly and without delay. Avoiding or suppressing issues can lead to resentment and emotional distance, which can negatively impact both the relationship and academic performance (Camp 2011). Openly addressing conflicts as they occur helps both partners find solutions quickly and maintain a harmonious balance.

**Set Clear Communication Boundaries:** While open communication is essential, it's also important to respect each other's boundaries. There will be times when one partner needs space to focus on studies or personal reflection. Understanding when and how to communicate—especially during busy academic periods—helps ensure that neither partner feels overwhelmed or suffocated. This balance between staying connected and allowing space is key to maintaining both academic focus and relationship well-being (Ulus 2021). In conclusion, open and frequent communication is vital for navigating the complexities of balancing academic responsibilities with relationship demands.

By discussing academic pressures, expressing needs, regularly checking in, and offering mutual support, students can build a relationship that is resilient to stress and conducive to both academic success and emotional fulfillment. Communication fosters trust, understanding, and emotional closeness, creating a strong foundation for personal and academic growth

#### **4. Support Each Other's Academic Goals:**

Supporting each other's academic goals can strengthen a relationship by fostering a sense of teamwork and partnership. When partners are invested in each other's success, they create an environment of mutual encouragement and motivation (Anderman 2020). Whether by studying together, offering words of encouragement during challenging periods, or simply providing a listening ear, both partners can help each other stay focused and committed to their academic responsibilities. This shared support not only enhances academic performance but also deepens emotional connection. Celebrating academic achievements, big or small, further strengthens the relationship, as both partners feel acknowledged and valued in their pursuit of personal and academic growth (Armstrong & Ludlow 2020). By actively engaging in each other's academic journeys, partners create a bond based on shared aspirations and mutual support, which ultimately benefits both the relationship and their individual goals

#### **5. Create a Study-Relationship Balance Plan:**

Developing a formal plan for balancing academics and relationships is a proactive and effective way to manage both aspects of life without feeling overwhelmed. By setting aside specific days or times for focused study, personal relaxation, and quality time together, students can create a clear structure that ensures neither academics nor the relationship is neglected (McFarlane 2003). For instance, dedicating certain evenings or weekends to date nights can help maintain emotional closeness, while blocking off uninterrupted study time ensures academic goals are prioritized. A balance plan can also include personal self-care time to prevent burnout, helping both partners stay refreshed and motivated. Planning ahead not only reduces stress but also helps to prevent the frustration that arises from conflicting demands on time (Drago 2004). This approach encourages intentionality, enabling students to meet both their academic and relationship commitments with clarity and confidence, while nurturing personal well-being in the process.

#### **Conclusion :**

Finding a balance between love and learning is undoubtedly a complex challenge, but it is one that students can achieve with the right approach. By cultivating strong time management skills, setting clear boundaries, communicating openly, and offering mutual support, both academic success and emotional well-being can coexist harmoniously. Rather than viewing a relationship as a distraction, students should see it as an opportunity to enhance personal growth, develop emotional resilience, and gain a supportive partner in their academic journey. The key to successfully balancing these two critical areas lies in adaptability, mutual understanding, and the ability to prioritize personal and academic goals without sacrificing either. A fulfilling relationship can enhance both emotional health and academic performance when managed effectively, serving as a source of motivation, encouragement, and stability during times of stress. Ultimately, with thoughtful planning and a balanced perspective, students can enjoy the best of both

worlds—personal fulfillment through a loving relationship and academic excellence— setting a strong foundation for future success in both their personal lives and professional endeavors.

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