

CHARACTER



Friendship

December 2005

A Friend Is A Person Who Knows Me and Still Likes Me.
“A friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of Nature.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

As I pondered writing this article, I came upon many quotes honoring true and deep friendship. For example:

And a youth said, “Speak to us of Friendship.”
Your friend is your needs answered...
For you come to him with your hunger, and you seek him for peace...
And when he is silent your heart ceases not to listen to his heart.
And let your best be for your friend...
For what is your friend that you should seek him with hours to kill?
Seek him always with hours to live.
– Excerpt from The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran

One of my favorite quotes on friendship simply states, “A friend is someone who knows all about you but loves you anyway” (Anon.). I find great comfort in knowing a friend loves me for just being me. Ralph Waldo Emerson explains it more eloquently, “A friend is a person, with whom I may be sincere, Before him, I may think aloud.” In today’s world of hustle & bustle and glitz & glam, being able to be truly genuine with someone means so much.

A friendship of different life experiences or phases of life can be so enriching. George Eliot agreed, “Perhaps the most delightful friendships are those in which there is much agreement, much disputation, and yet more personal liking.” These friendships often are more able to draw from the differences and reveal our better selves. It’s amazing to me how rewarding and comfortable a friendship with differences can be.

Mark and I have a dear friendship with a couple whose marriage has fallen apart. It has been painful and uncomfortable to see them struggle. At first we thought we would just act like we didn’t know. But we did know! And by doing so we were unable to support and nurture them. They both felt so alone and burdened. We weren’t able to “heroically” save their marriage. But we gave a non-judgmental ear to listen and a strong shoulder to lean on. We were able to help smooth the painful transition for their children. We stood by them in their time of need.

We do love and appreciate the friend that will stand by us in our trials:

The Friend Who Just Stands By

Author Unknown

When trouble comes your soul to try
You love the friend who just stands by.
Perhaps there’s nothing he can do;
The thing is strictly up to you,
For there are troubles all your own,
And paths the soul must tread alone;
Times when love can’t smooth the road,
Nor friendship lift the heavy load.

But just to feel you have a friend,
Who will stand by until the end;
Whose sympathy through all endures,
Whose warm handclasp is always yours,
It helps somehow to pull you through
Although there’s nothing he can do;
And so with fervent heart we cry,
“God bless the friend who just stands by.”

Sometimes a true friend is someone who doesn’t just stand by. I love a friend who can see my needs and not just hold my hand. They see what needs to be done and roll up their sleeves and just start helping. When we were moving to Utah from Minnesota our scheduled movers decided to simply not show up. It was mid-June and every moving company in the area, near and far, was completely booked. We had two days to be out of our home. So we rented the two biggest trucks we could find and started loading them ourselves. Within the hour friends had found out about our dilemma and started showing up to help. By the evening we had nearly fifty neighbors and friends helping us – packing the kitchen, loading the furniture, wrapping the art, watching our five children, bringing in food for everyone. Through all the chaos, something strong and miraculous was manifest to me. True friendship is not passive. It is love in action.

When we got to Utah we were welcomed with another miracle. Friends from Minnesota had called relatives in Lindon to tell them about our situation. As soon as we pulled the moving vans into our new driveway, pick-up trucks and Suburbans started pulling up. They were full of new neighbors, ready to help us unload. People we didn’t even know were reaching out to us in our

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“The greatest good you can do for another is not to just share your riches, but to reveal to him his own.”
– Benjamin Disraeli

“A friend is a present to yourself”
– Robert Louis Stevenson

“Walking with someone, rather than merely showing them the way, is the true essence of friendship”
– Author Unknown

“The only way to have a friend is to be one”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

time of need. Great compassion was shown to us through this volunteer friendship. We were blessed by those who were willing to serve utter strangers.

Lindon is a great place. Our family loves it here! As newcomers we have observed that many here have extended family and long-time friends who live nearby. Because of these strong relationships the impression is often given that they do not need new friends. The old adage "Make new friends but keep the old, Some are silver and the others gold," seems relevant. I know that old friends are dear and special, like gold. But new friends can be of value as well. Don't limit yourself to the gold because the silver is precious, too. Maybe during this Holiday Season we can reach out to someone new. We can invite someone who isn't just like us into our homes. You might be surprised by the wonderful relationships that develop.

So, do I think friendship is worth it in this busy world of work, family, church and children? To put it in the words of the insightful writer, Charles Dickens, "Friendship? Yes, please."

Cristie Wood
Lindon Resident

Family Activities

--**Rudyard Kipling**, was born on December 30, 1865 He is remembered for his short stories, poetry, and novels. One of his novels, *The Jungle Book*, tells about a boy and his adventures and friendships with animals. How do friendships with those that are different from us enrich our lives.

--**Encourage involvement in various hobbies.** A child that has many interests is fun to be around. While pursuing a hobby, your child may find a friend that he enjoys working with.

--**Make a new family friend.** As a family, make a Christmas craft or treat and take it to someone that you don't know quite as well. Use this as a springboard for a get-acquainted conversation.

Book List

The How I Found A Friend by Irena Hale

The Very Lonely Firefly by Eric Caril

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Kid's Corner

The following two wonderful young women are friends at Pleasant Grove High School and they have this to say about friendship:

"Friendship helps you become like the people you hang around with, so choose good friends! My friends are so sweet and thoughtful. It makes me really happy when I am around them. I try to be a good friend by thinking of other people, remembering what they are doing, and comfort them when they need it."

Elizabeth Harris

"I don't know where I would be without my friends. Friendship is one of the greatest gifts I've been given. It is so valuable that life would not be as beautiful and enjoyable without them. I try to be to a good friend by listening (and not talk about yourself all the time!)"

Nikki Green

"A friend knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words."

We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials this year by using the web site located at www.lindoncharacterconnection.com. If you are interested in receiving a monthly reminder of the character traits and access to resource materials, please e-mail your address to arlainea@isquaredinc.com

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