



Genuine Friendship

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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I just had two lovely conversations with treasured long-term friends. (I won't call them "old friends" because that might imply that we are aging).

First of all, I was pleased to have an unplanned meeting with Bryan. He is CEO for a government agency and one of the first people who I met when I moved to Medicine Hat. I reported to work that morning sixteen years ago and he quickly began introducing me to other employees. His kindness was appreciated, and our friendship began forming right then as he gave me a comfortable start in my new workplace.

Over the next few years, even though he had so many responsibilities, Bryan would always "check in" and visit with me at the office. There were many times that we laughed together and others when we shared challenges. We encouraged, supported, and confronted each other when appropriate.

We didn't see each other very often after I moved on with other career paths, but an unexpected encounter was always a joyful one for both of us. Bryan and I never have or will make plans to meet. You see, the beauty of genuine friendship is that when we do meet it only takes a couple of minutes to "catch up". Then it just feels good - like no time has lapsed since our last encounter.

Late this afternoon Bryan and I unexpectedly met in a store and then stood in the cold beside our vehicles in the parking lot for an hour and visited. We shared memories and inspired each other with tales of our experiences since we had last seen each other.

I arrived home with a smile on my face, thinking about how blessed I have been over the years to know good, honest, and kind people like Bryan.

The light on my phone was flashing and I then heard the sweet message left for me by another friend who has been in my life since 1973. Chris and Garf have returned to retire and live in their hometown of Whitewood, Saskatchewan where we first met when Chris was a teacher in the school, and I was receptionist in the principal's office. Even though we haven't lived in the same town or city since then, we have held each other in our hearts for the past four decades.

Tonight, we used the foundation of love that we have built for each other as the basis for yet another great conversation. Even when we are all busy and don't make contact for weeks or even months, it always feels like time has not passed since our last talk. We understand and care about each other and that is all that matters.

Most dictionaries state that a friend is someone who you "know, like and trust". I am so thankful that many of my friendships go well beyond that.

Beautiful, long-term genuine friendships result when people know all about the other person but love him or her "anyway". They are about being able to share troubles and celebrate growth. About wanting the very, very best for the other person.

And they're about being genuinely excited to stand in the cold for an unplanned conversation with someone who you truly treasure. Or to cross the miles through a telephone conversation with someone who can warm your heart on a winter night.