

Friendship

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Someone once told me that I collect people. This may be true now, but it wasn't always this way. As a child I struggled with friendships. I never felt I could be myself so I was very quiet and stayed in the background when possible. As a teen I had a few close friends and kept everyone else at arm's length. If only I had known that not all friendships have to be the same, perhaps I could have made more lasting memories.

Aristotle said there are three types of friendships. Friendships of utility; these are people that tend to be useful to you in some way. Perhaps they are the computer genius that you will never be or your right hand man as you chair a large Kin project. We all have these friends and love them dearly regardless of their skills; however we are happy to have them to call upon when needed. As a member of Kin Canada for 13 years I am grateful to have encountered many of these intelligent and helpful people and have come to consider them, not only my friend, but also my family. After all, helping is what Kin is all about!

Next we have Friendships of pleasure; these lucky people are your lunch date, your gym buddy and that person that you just can't seem to get enough of. You can easily tell who they are because they are always by your side and there is always a plan in place for your next adventure. I am truly blessed to have had so many close friends in my life. With time and changes in our lives many of these blessings have drifted away but the happy memories will always remain. Not surprisingly, my Kin experience has given me a couple of these special people who are always at my side. Through thick and thin, laughter and tears, I cannot imagine a day without them.

Lastly we have Friendships of the good; People you admire, respect and share similar values with. In my lifetime I have encountered and stayed in touch with several of these "Good" people. Our time spent together seems to lessen but I think of them often and occasionally apply good advice that they have once given to me. These special people know who they are because I often tell them. They are worthy of these kind words and I am happy to deliver them. One of these fine people I encountered while participating in Kin speak-off. This young man was wise beyond his years, and his kindness and wit helped to push me through that stressful time. Although he lives quite far, we remain close friends and I still apply his sound advice when the need arises.

Reflecting on the hundreds of friendships my life has given me, I struggle to put them in only three categories. Friendships can evolve over time, change categories or perhaps someone fits in all three. One of my closest friends began as a friend of utility. Together we started a ladies walking group. This partnership quickly turned into a friendship of good, as we shared many interests and values. Just as our walks changed to runs, our friendship also changed and she now holds a place in all three of Aristotle's categories.

Friendship is a complex, delicate yet wonderful part of living. It is finding the good in someone and enjoying that piece of them. I believe there are many different types of friendships but in the end do any of them really matter. Just enjoy the people that surround you, and start working on your own collection!