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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



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Have you ever wondered what you would do if you were in a position where you could save a life by giving your own? Of course, chances of ever facing such a dramatic situation are slim. The challenges we're likely to face are more ordinary, and the opportunities for "giving our lives" that come our way will probably be more routine.

"Do we hang out with a friend who's going through a rough patch, but who isn't particularly fun to be around at the time, or do we make excuses and try to avoid him?" "Do we visit a friend when she's sick—not just once at the beginning, but regularly, if needed?" "If we score a ticket to a big game, but a friend didn't, would we be willing to give it to him?" "When a friend gets an incredible work or vacation opportunity, are we genuinely happy and excited for her, or are we jealous of her good fortune?" "When friends' choices of restaurants or activities are different from what we would have liked, do we always expect them to accommodate our wishes?"

Opportunities like these for "ordinary" sacrifices come up on a daily basis and are more valid tests of our character than hypothetical life-and-death drama. I've certainly not arrived yet, but working on this issue of *Motivated* inspired me to try harder to be the kind of friend that others can depend on. I hope it will do the same for you!

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Real Friends

By Theresa Leclerc, adapted



When I was a teenager, I thought I knew it all. I was full of insecurities, but I was also full of opinions—strong ones! Looking back, I feel sorry for my parents. I'm sure I wasn't an easy child to raise, especially as a teen. I didn't like the fact that I had stricter parents than some of my friends did, and I pulled away from my mom and dad, as many teens do. I was sure my parents didn't understand me, and I was right—they didn't! None of their other kids were anything like me. I questioned everything and had trouble keeping rules. However, although I was tough on the outside, all I really wanted deep down was to find someone who truly understood me.

One day I found myself at a gathering where I was the only teenager. While the adults talked in small groups, I sat off in a corner by myself, watching, until a woman named Joy came over and struck up a conversation. Eventually, I opened up and told her about all my troubles. I half expected her to lecture me, but instead she just listened. I could tell that she genuinely cared about getting to know me, and never once did I feel she was putting

me in my place or trying to change my opinion; she simply tried to understand me.

That conversation was the beginning of a friendship that continued through thick and thin for seven years, until Joy passed away. We would take long walks together and would sometimes write notes to each other about things that were harder to say in person. Even after she moved to a distant city, we kept in touch by phone and mail. For much of those seven years, Joy was so sick that she could have died at any time, but I never heard her complain. She was always bubbly and had a passion for people.

Joy taught me something important—that it was okay to be myself. And in the process, she also taught me to try to understand people in a deep way, to look beyond their appearance and sometimes even what they say, to accept them for who they are and show them unconditional love. Though we all seem so different, we're all made from the same stuff, and we all need love, understanding, and acceptance. When someone sees our need and fills it, we blossom. □

Singing in the Train

By Scott McGregor



Jack sank deeper into his seat in the cold train carriage and pulled his hat down over his ears. He and his fellow passengers had been stranded there for several hours already. The steam locomotive and the lead carriage of the overnight express train had jumped the tracks halfway between hell and nowhere. Now all they could do was wait until help arrived. It was 1959, the middle of winter, and the dead of night. No power, no heat, and no light except for a few flashlights that the conductor and some passengers had.

Jack knew it was going to take a while before the alarm was raised somewhere up the line when they realized that the express was not on schedule. Search parties would have to be mobilized and sent out with some caution. A train could be dispatched

up the single spur line in the other direction, but that would be risky, as they could find themselves traveling head on into the delayed express traveling from the other direction. The signal system on this part of the track was antiquated, as Jack, a train enthusiast, knew. The real search, he concluded, would not begin until dawn.

The train had come to a jerking halt. The steam locomotive and the lead carriage were off the track and had plowed into a thick gravel embankment. Both were upright, and miraculously no one was killed, although the engineer and fireman had sustained nasty head injuries. They had been carried back to one of the carriages to endure the freezing night with their passengers, several of whom had also been hurt. It was frustrating and scary to know that

they were out there with little chance of rescue till daylight.

Then from somewhere in Jack's carriage someone started singing. It was the old World War II Vera Lynn song, "The White Cliffs of Dover." Soon everyone in the carriage joined in. When that one was over, someone started another.

"We sang all night," recalled Jack. "We didn't care what the song was. We sang popular songs, old music hall numbers, hymns, even Christmas carols. As long as we kept singing, it kept our spirits up. People from other carriages came up and we all crowded in to keep warm. Most of us were strangers to one another, but we all became comrades in disaster, lifting one another's spirits.

"It was a mixed bunch, from young army recruits returning to camp from leave, to young families and a few old-timers, even some guys I wouldn't normally want to be around on a dark night. But somehow the social barriers all came down. I initially heard one enormous fellow—Clifford was his name, I learned—let off such a stream of cursing when the accident first occurred that it probably equaled all the other swearing and blasphemy that I had heard in my life until then. But he was the fellow that scooped up the engineer in his arms, carried him back to the carriage, and hovered about him like a

cross between an angel and a nurse for the rest of the night. If I've met anyone in my life that was a rough diamond, it was Clifford.

"I've been guilty many times of judging books by their covers, but in this fellow's case I was wrong—and probably have been many other times. It was the most incredible night of my life in many ways, and I made fast friends with many who were there. I was almost sorry when the rescue teams located us early the next morning."

On that miserable night, stranded in the middle of nowhere, Jack and his fellow passengers forged a lifetime of friendships. They decided to have a reunion every year on the date of the accident. Jack went to their weddings and some of their funerals. Clifford became an orderly at a hospital and then joined the Saint John Ambulance Brigade. Seems he had only been out of jail a few weeks before the wreck and was traveling that night to settle a few scores with some former "friends." "That wreck stopped me from making a wreck out of my life," he told Jack at one of their reunions several years later.

Jack got on with his life, being my dad amongst other things. It wasn't the most outstanding of lives, some might say, but he gained an outstanding lesson that night that never left him, and one he was fond of telling me. □

Our darkest experiences can sometimes turn out to be our best and can forge the greatest friendships.

Married to a Star

By Victoria Olivetta

In the romantic movies I watched while growing up, the whole universe seemed to pause when Mr. Right met Miss Right. From then on, apparently the only things they required for survival were doses of staring into each other's eyes and embracing, preferably in some dreamy exotic locale.

Like many others, I believed this was a true picture of falling in love. But real life doesn't work like that. I never found that perfect "Mr. Right"—at least not the Hollywood variety—but I did meet my own movie star.

My husband is not a particularly romantic person. He has never showed up on a white horse with a red rose in hand, declaring that I will be his princess forever; he doesn't pull me outside to gaze at the full moon together; and he hasn't written me reams of poetry. But he's upheld me through the dark times, remained by me when I've been sick, and

survived my mood swings without complaint.

We're different and know that we need each other. When I'm discouraged, my husband encourages me. When I fall asleep on the couch while we're watching TV, he lowers the volume until I wake up and go to bed. If things get rough, we pray together for divine direction. When we arrive at a solution, we thank God together.

As I'm writing this, he's gone out—in the rain—to buy what we need to make lunch.

No, he's not a movie star, but I think he deserves a prize! He is a genuine guy who has proven he'll stay at my side on sunny or rainy days, for better or for worse. He loves me and our children—and for me, this is the best love story ever told.

I am thankful that Mr. Right came my way. He's the star of my life's movie. ■



36 Seconds

By Misty Kay

Mour husband Daniel and I live with our four children on the 13th floor of an apartment building in Taichung City, Taiwan. Needless to say, the elevator is a part of our daily lives.

It had been just another normal, busy day, with most of my time and energy spent keeping the kids happy, fed, and out of one another's hair. We had all been out together, doing what I don't even remember, and were coming home. We stepped into the empty elevator, and one of the kids pressed the button. The number 13 lit up on the panel, and the doors closed.

"Children, your mother and I have an important announcement," Daniel said in a way that commanded everyone's attention. I had no idea what this was about.

Daniel is a spontaneous man, full of surprises, and I never know what to expect from him. I decided to play along. I moved next to him and put my arm in his to add authority to whatever he was going to say.

"Your mother and I want you to know that after fourteen years of marriage, we are still totally and emphatically in love."

The kids laughed a little and asked, "Why is that an important announcement?"

Daniel replied that with so many marriage problems in the world and divorce so common, children need to know that their parents love each other. Then he looked our son in the eye and said, "When you get married someday, you need to treat your wife right."

A loud ding announced the thirteenth floor, and the elevator doors opened. When we walked into our apartment, the kids' chatter was punctuated by little giggles, as Daniel hugged me affectionately.

In 36 seconds between the first and thirteenth floors, Daniel had brought our family closer, put smiles on our faces, taught our son a life lesson, and put warmth in my heart that filled my whole being. ▣

25 Ways to be a True Friend

By Lori Deschene, adapted



Don't wait for people to be friendly. Show them how.—Author Unknown

The other night I called an old friend I hadn't talked to in a while. As we caught up, shared stories, and laughed over private jokes that would sound ridiculous had the phone been tapped, I wondered why I let so much time go by since I'd last given her a call.

We don't live close to each other so grabbing a coffee or hitting the gym together isn't an option, but really connecting with her, sharing pieces of my life, and receiving the pieces she wants to give doesn't require specific geography.

We can be great friends to each other, despite the distance, if we choose to make the effort. If we remember to make the time, we can have those types of meaningful, fulfilling conversations that make us feel seen, understood, appreciated, and supported.

Then I started to think about all the times when I've gotten busy and lost touch with friends who live right down the street—times when I got caught up in everything going on in my life and forgot to nurture my relationships.

We need meaningful connections with other people.

Not everyone has to be a close friend, but it's integral to our happiness that we show people who we truly are, allow ourselves to know them in return, and then remind each other through actions—small or large—that we care.

We never need to be or feel alone in this world, but it's up to us to create and allow opportunities to be together, enjoy each other, and be there for each other. It's up to us to make our relationships priorities.

With this in mind, I recently asked on Facebook, "What does it mean to be a true friend?" I compiled some of the ideas that resonated strongly with me (some of them paraphrased or slightly altered for ease of reading).

Here are some of these ideas:

- 1.** Always be there, even in silence.
- 2.** Be kind and listen. Be fun and light. Be serious when needed, love extensively, and forgive always.
- 3.** Don't be scared to tell each other the truth no matter how difficult it may be.

4. Guide each other in times of need with your honest opinions.

5. A true friend is someone who always listens and is genuinely interested in the good and bad, and someone who calls or writes just to say hello.

6. Be loyal in confidence and character, always open and inviting to share concerns, and always honest even if you disagree.

7. A true friend tries his best to cheer you up when you are upset and makes you feel special.

8. Try and improve their life through your friendship.

9. Be who you truly are—be that vulnerable—and provide the other person the space, safety, and choice to do the same.

10. Be genuinely happy when they get, receive, or achieve something you truly desire.

11. Share the truth in your heart, without the fear of misunderstandings.

12. Be loyal and forgive, but above all, love and respect.

13. Accept the person as they are, as an individual, without conditions. Also, as important as it is for you to be there for them, sometimes you have to be willing to let them be there for you.

14. Remain friends despite a person's choices in life and don't bail on them when they aren't who you want them to be.

15. A true friend always supports the person but doesn't feel compelled

to support the situation. A true friend knows how and when to say the firm, "No."

16. Help yourself and those closest to you grow. To live means to grow, and a true friend is someone that you can honestly say has helped define you as an individual.

17. Celebrate the wins and be there to support the losses. Keep your word and acknowledge it when you don't.

18. Walk in to come to a friend's aid when others are walking out.

19. Don't hold grudges over petty disagreements.

20. Show up! You can pretend to care, but you cannot pretend to show up.

21. A true friend is someone you feel as comfortable with as you do when you are by yourself. No illusions, no holding back.

22. Be there for the other person in the same way you would be there for yourself. Granted, if you can't be there for yourself, that's probably something you should address first.

23. Don't let personal stuff get in the way.

24. Know someone's least admirable characteristics and still love and support them.

And I'll add the last...

25. Share honest appreciation every chance you get.

Do you have anything to add to the list?

Behind a Whisper



By Anna Perlini, adapted

He walked into the shop, accompanied by another young man about his age. He was well dressed and held an air of self-confidence typical of many youth these days—that is, a superficial self-confidence that often hides feelings of insecurity and possibly some deep emotional scar.

I like to observe people. What can be more fascinating, mysterious, and captivating than a human life? What lies behind that apparently normal expression, those nice, clean clothes, and that well-trimmed hair?

We were both standing by the counter waiting for an attendant to be available to help, when he got a phone call and seemed to have to rush away. On his way out, he leaned toward me and whispered a few words in my ear: “You have a beautiful voice.”

I jolted. What a weird thing to tell a perfect stranger!

I looked at him again, trying to place

if I’d met him before, but nothing came to mind. I do sing from time to time, but I couldn’t remember ever seeing this man before.

“I’m sorry?”

His well-shaved, mildly tanned face turned red, and he made a motion I didn’t recognize.

“I don’t understand. Have we met?”

He nodded, then grimaced as he whispered, “In jail.”

Then I remembered. We must have met during one of our troupe’s regular performances for the inmates at the city jail.

Realizing he didn’t want to broadcast this shady side of his past, I just smiled to indicate I understood and was happy he had been released.

By now, his friend was calling him from outside, and he had to rush away.

Just enough time for one last whisper: “Thank you for coming.” ■

The **One** and **Only You**

Three tips for building **self-esteem**

By Gloria Cruz, adapted

It's difficult to love others as yourself if your own self-esteem is low. Each person is unique and endowed with a distinct balance of strengths and weaknesses. The problem begins when we compare ourselves with other people and their situations, or we measure ourselves by society's standards of success and eventually find ourselves in a state of constant unhappiness.

If this is how you sometimes feel, consider these suggestions that I have found great self-esteem boosters:

1. Analyze your personal core values, and if necessary, make changes.

Ask yourself which is more important—your health or your image? Making money or having peace of mind? Your work or spending time with your family? And so on. Recognizing what counts the most for you gives you clear targets to aim for.

2. Make a list of your strengths.

What do you like about yourself? Don't focus on your lacks or weaknesses, but rather on what is good about yourself, your talents, your positive traits. Perhaps you are creative, kind, cheerful, intelligent, easygoing, or generous. While we have to admit our weaknesses in order to keep them under control, it's also important to recognize our strengths.

3. Be thankful for all the good you have.

In whatever situation you find yourself, try to identify something positive to be thankful for, remembering that "trouble is the structural steel that goes into character-building." (Douglas Meador)

When you learn to understand and take care of your emotional needs you will be able to reach out to others and be a greater positive influence on those around you. The change begins within you. **□**



The Poetry of Love

Love is just a word until someone comes along and gives it meaning.
—Author unknown

Love means to love that which is unlovable; or it is no virtue at all.
—G. K. Chesterton

Loving can cost a lot, but not loving always costs more, and those who fear to love often find that want of love is an emptiness that robs the joy from life. —Merle Shain

To love for the sake of being loved is human, but to love for the sake of loving is angelic.—Alphonse de Lamartine

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.—Aesop

You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments when you have truly lived are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love.—Henry Drummond

Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter: whoever finds one has found a treasure.—Sirach 6:14

Love is not blind but visionary; it sees into the very heart of its object, and sees the “real self” behind and in the midst of the frailties and shortcomings of the person.—Andras Angyal

Beginning today, treat everyone you meet as if they were going to be dead by midnight. Extend to them all the care, kindness, and understanding you can muster, and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again.—Og Mandino

Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference.
—Barbara De Angelis

Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.
—Mark Twain

