

Volume 3, Issue 11

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

Built to Stand

I Think I Get It

Parenting from the Heart

Helping children make friends

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FROM THE EDITOR

Most of us didn't understand the law of gravity in scientific terms until someone explained it to us, even though we've been subject to it since birth. We became aware of its basic effect as soon as we were old enough to sit up and topple over.—“What goes up must come down.” When we got a little bigger, we learned “The bigger they come, the harder they fall.” Those were tough lessons at a tender age, but they are why we can now handle the ceramic dishes without breaking them and climb a ladder without breaking our neck.

Gravity has benefits as well as undesirable consequences, of course. Without giving it a passing thought, much less due credit, we use gravity to arch the ball into the basket, draw water from the faucet, check our weight, and perform a thousand other services.

Just as gravity and other laws of physics govern our physical world, there are laws to govern our relationships. If gravity is our starting point in learning about physical realities, parental love is our starting point in learning about relationships. Our parents' love is all we need as babies to feel secure and complete. But as we grow up, our world expands. Situations and relationships get more complex. We find that gravity isn't the only natural force at play, and that not everyone loves us the way our parents do.

Interpersonal relationships are one of life's greatest challenges, but also one of its greatest rewards. How can we both give and get the most from those relationships? Where do we even start?

The articles in this issue of *Motivated* include some key elements to successful and caring relationships. As sure as the law of gravity, the more we put these key elements into practice in our interaction with others, the better our experiences and relationships will get.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

The Other Side of the Desk

By Natalia Nazarova

I was submitting some legal paperwork and to my dismay, there were several discrepancies in my documents. Something that at first appeared easy to rectify instead took several weeks and numerous appointments to sort out.

At one of the offices where I had been sent, I came face to face with Olga. She struck me as efficient, but rather curt. We got off to a rough start. Mine was probably the hundredth problem she had had to deal with that day, and it seemed I would get no sympathy from her. To make matters worse, her computer froze and she had to reboot. She muttered that she was going to take an aspirin and would be back in a minute.

While she was away, I thought about how to handle the situation better, and suddenly I saw things from a different perspective. For a moment, I put aside my aggravation with how things were going and tried to imagine what it was like to sit on the other side of that desk.

As we waited for her computer to reboot, I asked Olga if she had encountered my specific problem

before. That was the beginning of a dialogue between two tired, frustrated women.

Olga explained that she had only been working at that job for a few months. In the past year, she and her husband had divorced, and she had gone through a very difficult time adjusting to her new life as a single parent. I sympathized and told her a little about my family and personal situation. Eventually, she was able to log back into the system and enter the correct information.

Over the next few days, we spoke on the phone a number of times as I checked on the progress of my paperwork. Each time our communications grew friendlier and more relaxed, and when I visited her office to collect the finalized document, Olga took extra time to verify that everything was correct. We parted as good friends.

I caught myself smiling as I stepped out into the windy evening. Taking a personal interest in someone else's problems had transformed a mutual ordeal into a mutually positive experience. 💧



SELF-PRESERVATION

by Peter Kelly

In one episode of *Foyle's War*, a TV series set in Great Britain during the early part of World War II, the Nazis had already defeated France and an invasion of Great Britain seemed imminent. The uncertainty, fear, and instinct to take care of themselves and their own led some people to show less concern for others than they would in normal circumstances. Many hoarded. Others stole. Some even committed murder.

Some people, in contrast, reacted in a completely different manner. They were heroic, not by performing great deeds, but because they performed small deeds selflessly. They faced their difficulties with dignity. They helped one another. They looked out for the welfare of their neighbors and shared what they had.

Seeing the contrast between the two types of responses brought home the challenges we face when we find ourselves in uncertain, difficult circumstances. In times of economic or social turmoil, when the status quo changes, when everything seems topsy-turvy, it's natural for people to feel concerned for themselves first and foremost.

When all around us is unstable, we

become destabilized too. When what we thought to be solid ground begins to feel like shifting sand, fear can grip us—fear of the future and fear of the changes being thrust upon us. If we allow that fear to overpower us, we feel that we must take control of events by taking matters into our own hands. This isn't necessarily bad, since the "fight or flight" instinct is built into our nature; we automatically respond to perceived danger with moves to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

If we plow forward with our self-serving plans without consideration for those around us, chances are we will make decisions that will hurt others. Promises and commitments that we've previously made will take a back seat, and we'll gravitate toward what is best for us. This can cause disillusionment, resentment, and bitterness—any of which will damage friendships.

When this happens, we suffer as well. It may not come in ways we can see, at least not immediately, but it invariably does us harm. I read somewhere that in business, if someone is displeased with a certain product, as a rule they will tell about 50 other people about it in their lifetime. If we

have damaged someone's faith in us by harming them with our self-preserving acts, they may never fully trust us again.

Not everyone will respond in the same way, of course; the human instinct of self-preservation takes a more prominent role for some than for others. The challenge

we face is finding the right balance. While we feel naturally driven toward self-preservation, we can make an effort to temper our responses to circumstances and events with love, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. ♦

BE SLOW—BE QUICK!

Be slow to suspect—quick to trust;
Slow to condemn—quick to justify;
Slow to offend—quick to defend;
Slow to expose—quick to shield;
Slow to belittle—quick to appreciate;
Slow to demand—quick to give;
Slow to provoke—quick to help;
Slow to resent—quick to forgive.

—Author unknown

THE RESPECT EFFECT

A banker always tossed a coin in the cup of a legless beggar who sat on the street outside the bank. But unlike most people, the banker would always insist on getting one of the pencils the man had beside him. "You are a merchant," the banker would say, "and I always expect to receive good value from the merchants I do business with."

One day the legless man was not on the sidewalk. Time passed and the banker forgot about him until he walked into a public building one day. There in the concessions stand, sat the former beggar, now the owner of his own small business.

"I have always hoped you might come by someday," the man said to the banker. "You are largely responsible for my being here. You kept telling me that I was a merchant. I started thinking of myself that way, rather than as a beggar receiving gifts. I started selling pencils—lots of them. You gave me self-respect. You caused me to look at myself differently."

—Retold by Randy Stanford

LOVING-KINDNESS IS TWICE BLESSED

By Lilia Potters

The weather had been dark and rainy, and I felt just as gloomy. It happens to us all, I guess.

As I sat at my desk, I remembered it was the birthday of a longtime friend—a single, middle-aged woman who had dedicated the past 30 years to nursing and loved her work. Knowing that she didn't have family in town, I decided to give her a call. Sure enough, she was on B shift, scheduled to work late into the evening, and wouldn't have much of a birthday this year. As always, though, she sounded cheerful and was happy I had called.

After I hung up, I couldn't shake the feeling that she would really appreciate a little special attention on her birthday. Still feeling a little gloomy myself, I tried to put the thought out of my mind, but as the day passed I couldn't shake it. I finally gave in, and that evening set off to the hospital with a card, a slice of cheesecake, and a "flower" sculpted from balloons.

My friend's grateful smile and joyful exclamations assured me I had done the right thing and were a generous reward for the little effort it had taken.

When I got home, I realized that I had not only cheered up a lonely friend on her birthday, but I had caused my own gloom to dissipate in the process. Making her day had made my own.

Isn't that the way it is when we take the time and make the effort to do something for someone else? It's like the little saying, "Loving-kindness is twice blessed; it blesses him who gives, and him who receives."

Life constantly presents us with opportunities to take an extra step or do a kind deed that will make a difference to someone. And the wonderful thing is that as we do, it changes things for the better for us too. Like a boomerang, the blessing comes back to us. ♡



A good friend is a connection to life—a tie to the past, a road to the future, the key to sanity in a totally insane world.

—Lois Wyse
(1926–2007)

BUILT TO STAND

By Yoko Matsuoka

At about 3 PM on March 11, 2011, the Tohoku earthquake hit the northeastern half of Japan. It was the worst earthquake in that area's recorded history. Thousands were killed, and hundreds of thousands more were forced to evacuate and move in with friends or into temporary shelters.

When we felt the first tremors, my sister, Yuriko, and I thought nothing of them. Small earthquakes are frequent, sometimes daily, occurrences in Japan. Everyone learns to take them in stride. However, when the shaking escalated instead of subsiding, we rushed outside and held onto each other just to stay on our feet. The ground undulated. Our house, which was built to withstand earthquakes, swayed like the trees outside but didn't fall. We later learned that in the area where we live, 205 km (128 miles) from the epicenter, the tremor measured 6.5 in magnitude.

My first concern after the quake was how my friends and family had fared. The electricity, gas, and water had all been cut, the phone lines were jammed, and it was very cold. Transportation had ground to a halt, so Yuriko and I could not even get to where our parents were. Realizing that the best thing we could do in such a situation was pray, we prayed for everyone we could think of. Eventually we were able to get through to our parents. I have never been so relieved as when they told us they were safe.

When our electricity was restored, I got online to find out how my other family members and friends across Japan were doing. It had only been a few hours since the earthquake struck, but my Facebook wall was already plastered with notes. "How are you doing?" "I'm praying for you!" "You and your family are in my prayers!"

One by one, our friends reported that they were unharmed. Some people told of having been near factories that had caught fire, or near the seashore where they could have been swept away by the ensuing tsunami, but all had been protected from harm.

The earthquake made me appreciate my friends and their support more than ever. Like the sturdy construction of our house, made to withstand violent shaking, friendship is best proven in times of trouble. 💧





"NOBODY LIKES ME!" HELPING CHILDREN MAKE FRIENDS



By Lisa M. Cope, adapted web reprint

It's a heartbreaker. Our child comes home from school one day and says he doesn't have any friends and that nobody likes him—the dreaded words no parent wants to hear. We've been there; we know how cruel it can be on the playground and how quickly friendships seem to come and go throughout life. We want to wrap up our little guy and protect him from the world, and most of all, we want to ensure that he has plenty of friends.

Every child is born with an innate need to attach or be in a relationship, but how he goes about forming those relationships depends largely on his temperament. Children can start to develop real friendships around the age of four or five. When everything goes smoothly, it can be exhilarating and great. But when we see our child hitting some bumps in the road to having his own "Best Friend Forever (BFF)," we can help.

To support the development of friendships in our child's life, we can try some of these techniques:

♥ **Offer a variety of opportunities for play and socializing.** Have

friends over for play dates or lunch. Sign him up for group activities such as art, drama, or sports. Expose him to different areas of play to help him learn to socialize. Additionally, include him when talking to people out of his normal range of peers. Take him to visit a neighbor, or bring him along to run errands. The more he is exposed to interacting with all kinds of people, the more he will learn to do the same.

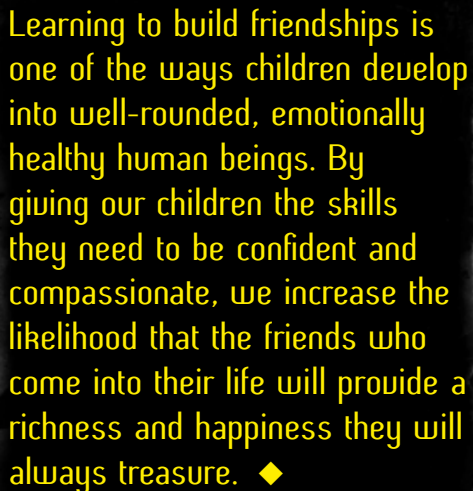
♥ **Provide support.** Pick up on his social cues by listening to what he says happened on the playground. Support his choice of friends and invite them home. Try getting to know his friends and their parents.

♥ **Stay balanced when things are hard.** Go ahead and empathize, but keep it in perspective. Making friends is a lifelong process and will of course have its ups and downs.

♥ **Show by example.** Perhaps most importantly, show him how to be a good friend and make friends. The best way is to model the correct behavior.

There are several ways to accomplish this at home:

1. Help your child realize his own strengths.
2. Have a sense of humor about yourself and your shortcomings.
3. Listen to your child without criticism.
4. Be kind, give compliments, wave to a friend, and open the door for someone.
5. Be understanding of what others are going through by showing empathy.
6. Don't complain. Instead, teach your child to accept what can't be changed by working hard to change the things that can. ♦



Learning to build friendships is one of the ways children develop into well-rounded, emotionally healthy human beings. By giving our children the skills they need to be confident and compassionate, we increase the likelihood that the friends who come into their life will provide a richness and happiness they will always treasure. ♦

FRIENDSHIP MAKING SKILLS

Here are more top friendship-making skills to model and teach your child:

- Making eye contact
- Listening to a conversation
- Resolving conflicts
- Introducing oneself
- Meeting new people
- Starting a conversation
- Joining in
- Handling rejection
- Staying calm
- Saying no
- Encouraging others
- Asking permission
- Apologizing
- Sharing and taking turns
- Bouncing back
- Problem solving
- Using good manners
- Suggesting an activity
- Identifying emotions
- Sticking up for yourself
- Expressing feelings
- Accepting criticism
- Compromising
- Negotiating

I THINK I GET IT

By Jessie Richards


I boarded the plane that would take me home from a visit to Toronto, Canada. A man came and sat in the seat beside me, talking on his iPhone. I recognized his South African accent, having attended a conference there the previous year.

Soon enough, Andrew Harrison and I were engaged in a lively conversation that lasted for the rest of the flight. He had many stories to tell, and I mostly listened. I discovered he had experience in outdoor adventure team building. For several years his job had involved taking teams of coworkers, often executives, on adventurous outings into the South African bush—an experience that would, quite literally, stretch them to their limits.

Andrew grinned as he told me in detail about the various dilemmas, puzzles, and challenges he would set up for these office dwellers in the great outdoors. As they encountered situations where they were physically challenged, emotionally tested, and downright scared, they would start to become different people—people who had gained new perspectives and understood things about themselves and their coworkers that they hadn't seen or understood before. When they returned home, most of them would get back to work with significant issues resolved.

That sounded to me like a fascinating prospect—to learn new things about my coworkers and myself by testing my limits. I also thought about how engaging it must have been to be in his position—not just for the sheer adventure of being in interesting and exciting places, but for the opportunity to see others experience epiphanies and transformations.

It's not every day that I get to talk to someone like Andrew, and I figured I could get some excellent tips and advice based on his years of experience in working with people from such an interesting angle.



“In all your years of team-building,” I asked, “what would you say has been the most common issue or problem that needed to be resolved among these groups of people?”

“Communication. The issue has nearly always been communication.”

“Because people who work together don’t talk to each other enough?”

“They talk plenty! What hardly anyone does enough of is listen.”

That was an Aha! moment for me ... or more like a Duh! moment. It sounded familiar enough, although I know I’m not nearly as good at listening as I should be. I said earlier that I mostly listened during our conversation, but that was because I really wanted to hear Andrew’s stories. In other circumstances, though, I don’t think I can say as much for myself.

Andrew went on to share how communication isn’t communication unless people understand one another. More often than not, people think they have communicated because they have said what they felt needed to be said, or have written what they felt needed to be written, but in reality they don’t have a clue whether or not the other person understood them. Very often, the other person will have gotten a completely different idea than what the communicator intended.

To find out if you have communicated effectively or have understood what someone else was communicating, ask questions and—you guessed it—listen!

Something else just came to me about the beauty of listening: There are times in our lives when we don’t feel we have a whole lot to give. We’re struggling, maybe even a little lost, ourselves. We want to help others, but what can we say that’s sure to help? Well, maybe there are situations when there isn’t anything we can say that would help. But everyone wants to be listened to and understood. If I can listen, I’ll always have something valuable to give. Most likely, that will be more appreciated than whatever I could say anyway. 💧



Be a Friend

A friend is someone who understands your past, believes in your future, and accepts you just the way you are.

—Author unknown

The only way to have a friend is to be one.—Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)

Are you upset little friend? Have you been lying awake worrying? Well, don't worry ... I'm here. The flood waters will recede, the famine will end, the sun will shine tomorrow, and I will always be here to take care of you.—Charlie Brown to Snoopy in *Peanuts*, by Charles Schulz

The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing ... not healing, not curing ... that is a friend who cares.

—Henri Nouwen (1932–1996)

Sometimes being a friend means mastering the art of timing. There is a time for silence. A time to let go and allow people to hurl themselves into their own destiny. And a time to prepare to pick up the pieces when it's all over.

—Gloria Naylor (b. 1950)

A cheerful friend is like a sunny day spreading brightness all around.

—John Lubcock (1834–1913)

A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.

—Arabian proverb

Do not save your loving speeches
For your friends till they are dead;
Do not write them on their tombstones,
Speak them rather now instead.

—Anna Cummin

