

RANDOM REFLECTIONS: Appreciating Friendships!

By Kathryn Wishlow

As Valentine's Day approaches, I find myself thinking about how my many friendships have contributed to my "love of life" over the years. I even remembered that I used to have a t-shirt which said on the front, "Friends are the Chocolate Chips in the Cookies of Life!" In other words, friends can provide the best sweet spots in your everyday existence. Well, mine sure do!

Who knows what kind of chemistry, common ground or kindred spirit brings people together in the first place? All I do know, is that shared experiences and stories, history together, similar characteristics such as kindness and integrity, plus putting in the effort to stay connected despite geography ... all are important contributions to a person having lasting friendships.

Being a winter that has contributed to more "staying home" time due to constantly shifting weather conditions, I sure appreciated the efforts my friends have made to keep in touch. Last month when I caught a bit of a cold (first one in over thirty years) I decided to postpone a few get togethers that I had been really looking forward to ... for two reasons. Firstly, I was quite fatigued and not my best self

for visiting and secondly, I did not want to pass on whatever it was that I had.

Realizing the actual value of having people who care about your welfare, is something we often forget to think about with the stresses of daily living. Three times that week, I was taken aback by the kind efforts of local friends. The first one showed up with a homemade soup and my favourite carrot cake with cream cheese icing to tempt my poor appetite. Two days later, I got a call from a good buddy who was bent on bringing me a quart preserve jar of "penicillin soup" despite the storm. It lasted me two days.

Just when I was wishing I had more soup because I was too tired to cook anything, a third dear friend called to say she had heard I was "under the weather" and she was going to drop off a big container of chicken rice soup she had finished making. I actually teared up in gratitude when she showed up an hour later at my back door. I could only throw a hug from across the room for fear of contaminating her with whatever it was that was affecting me. Friends from far away must have sensed the need to connect and called and texted. I am

convinced their kindly concerns and of course the soups contributed to putting me back to my old self in a week. You know who you are and I thank you so much!

That is why I decided that they should have tokens of my appreciation and each of them will get a Valentine's Day card. Love, kindness, concern, caring and gratitude can be expressed in many ways. My ninety-two year old neighbour and friend takes the time to brush the snow off my car while he's out doing his own. We take turns providing dinners and friendly banter at our bi-monthly cribbage matches. Good friends and neighbours are absolutely priceless! Hmmmm ... Maybe people south of our border might need to be reminded of that?

(Kathryn Wishlow belongs to White Pine Writers Inc., a local group of like-minded authors whose book "The art of ... RePurposing Yourself!" is available locally & at Indigo/Chapters. More items are coming soon. Follow them on FaceBook or www.whitepinewriters.ca)