

A
LITTLE
BOOK
OF

FRIENDSHIP

RUSKIN BOND

A LITTLE BOOK OF

The word 'FRIENDSHIP' is written in a highly decorative, cursive script. The letters are interconnected with elegant flourishes, particularly at the beginning and end of the word. The 'F' has a large, sweeping tail that loops back under the 'R'. The 'I' and 'P' also feature decorative elements, with the 'P' having a long, curved tail that loops under the 'S'.

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friendship

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RAINLIGHT
RUPA

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Introduction

My *A Little Book of Life* was so well received that my publishers suggested that I compile another Little Book—a selection of personal reflections and quotations which could be helpful to readers in times of stress. Or even in times of contentment.

And what better theme than friendship?

My own life has been greatly influenced by friendships, old and new. Even though some may be far away, they are never far from my thoughts. Sometimes friends have become family, and sometimes, friends have made me a part of their families.

My notebooks are full of thoughts and observations on the subject of friendship—some are my own reflections, others words of wisdom passed on to us by great men and women. And as with the earlier Little Book, we have provided readers with a number of blank pages where they can put down their own thoughts or favourite quotations—or even the names and characteristics of their closest friends!

I have been writing for over sixty-five years, and I realize now that my greatest friends have been my readers. They have sustained me over the years. May they prosper and be happy!

Ruskin Bond

To have a good day,
find a

NEW

friend.

When I was eight, my father took me by the hand and led me up the steps of old forts and monuments, and told me their stories. He was the ideal companion, the best friend a boy could have had at that age. As I put together this little book of thoughts and sayings on friendship, I invoke his blessing...

for to live in the hearts of those we leave behind is never to die.



Fools try to make people like them; wise men strive to like others.



‘Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing.’

—*Benjamin Franklin*



‘Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;

But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

Of each new-hatch’d,

unfledged comrade.’

—*William Shakespeare*



‘An honest friend is worth more than a throne.’

—*Chinese proverb*



‘One friend in a lifetime is much; two are many; three are hardly possible.

Friendship needs a certain parallelism of life. a

community of thought, a rivalry of aim.'

—Henry Adams



'Tell me thy company, and I'll tell thee what thou art.'

—Cervantes



'Friendship is born at that moment when one person
says to another, "What!
You too? I thought I was the only one."'

—C.S. Lewis



'Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers
within yourself that you have built against it.'

—Rumi



A great book is a friend that never lets you down.
You can return to it again and again and the joy first derived from it will still be
there.



'Behold, I do not give
lectures or a little charity, when I give I give myself.'

—Walt Whitman



'The wise man does not lay up treasure.'

The more he gives to
others, the more he has for his own.'

—*Lao Tzu*



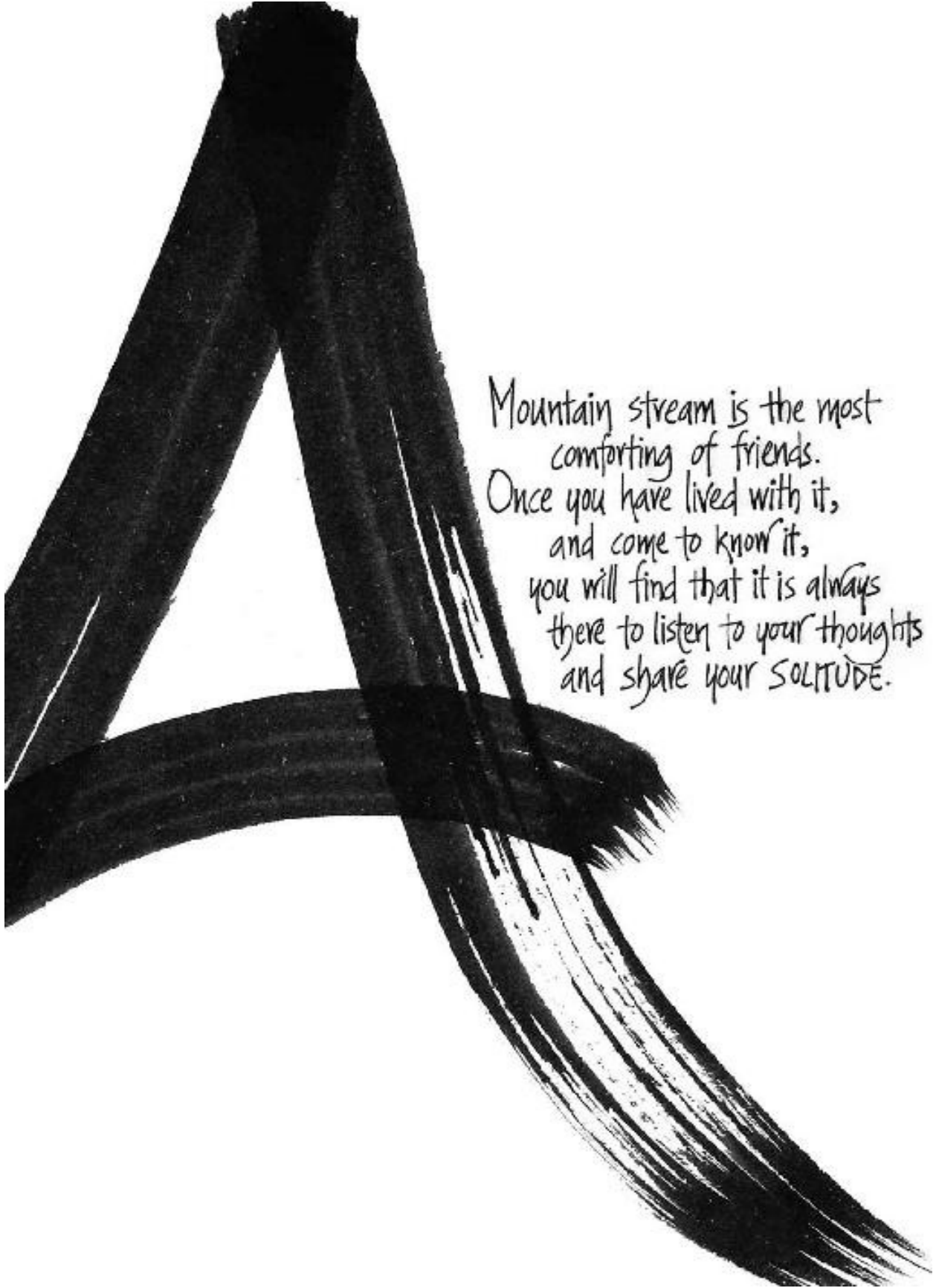
'Friendship is a word the very sight of which in print makes the heart warm.'

—*Augustine Birrell*



Notes





Mountain stream is the most
comforting of friends.
Once you have lived with it,
and come to know it,
you will find that it is always
there to listen to your thoughts
and share your SOLITUDE.

‘If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair.’

—*James Boswell*



One kind word can warm a heart for years.



‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.’

—*New Testament*



‘A good man finds all the world friendly.’

—*Indian proverb*



‘For there is no friend like a sister,
In calm or stormy weather, To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.’

—*Christina Rossetti*



‘Easy at first, the language of friendship Is, as we soon discover, Very difficult to speak well...
And, unless spoken often, soon goes rusty.
Distance and duties divide us, But absence will not seem an evil If it make our re-meeting A real occasion. Come when you can: Your room will be ready.’

—W.H. Auden



‘Hail Guest! We ask not what thou art;
If Friend, we greet thee, hand and heart;
If Stranger, such no longer be;
If Foe, our love shall conquer thee.’

—Old Welsh door verse



‘Gratitude preserves old friendship and begets new.’

—Scottish proverb



‘Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.’

—Lord Alfred Tennyson



The sins of the warm-hearted should be judged on a different scale from those
of the cold-blooded.’

—Dante



‘The true test of friendship is to be able to sit or walk with a friend for an hour in
perfect silence without wearying of one another’s company.’

—Dinah Maria Craik



‘Children need love, especially when they do not deserve it.’

—Harold Hulbert



Notes



THERE IS NO GREATER
DESERT OR
WILDERNESS THAN
TO BE WITHOUT

TRUE

FRIENDS?

—Francis Bacon

‘No man who knows what friendship is ever gave up a friend because he turned out to be disreputable. His only reason for giving up a friend is that he has ceased to care for him; and, when that happens, he should reproach himself for this mortal poverty of affection; not the friend for having proved unworthy.’

—A. Clutton Brock



‘I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman— I have detested you long enough. I came to you as a grown child Who has had a pig-headed father; I am old enough now to make friends. It was you that broke the new wood, Now is a time for carving. We have one sap and one root— Let there be commerce between us.’

—Ezra Pound

To a Squirrel

‘Come play with me; Why should you run Through the shaking tree As though I’d a gun To strike you dead? When all I would do Is to scratch your head And let you go.’

—W.B. Yeats



People come to tell me of your faults, dear friend. They go over them, again and again, and I nod and listen patiently, for I have known them all too well. I cannot expect these well-wishers to see that your faults have made me love you more.



The nice thing about old photographs is that we can turn to them from time to time, relive the past, revive old friendships, admire ourselves when we were younger, shed a sentimental tear or two, and come back to the present with a

feeling that life isn't such a waste of time, after all... Friends and lovers have come and gone, and life has been richer because of them.
There's something to be said for photography: it puts life into perspective!



'What is a friend?
A single soul dwelling in two bodies.'

—Aristotle



'Let your boat of life be light, packed with only what you need—a homely home and simple pleasures, one or two friends, worth the name, someone to love and someone to love you, a cat, a dog, and a pipe or two, enough to eat and enough to wear, and a little more than enough to drink; for thirst is a dangerous thing.'

—Jerome K. Jerome



Notes





should love our friends
as true lovers of art love pictures—
they keep their eyes fixed on the
good points and do not
notice the others.

‘Across the gateway of my heart
I wrote “No Thoroughfare”, But love came laughing by, and cried:
“I enter everywhere.”’

—*Herbert Shipman*



‘Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?’

—*Abraham Lincoln*



‘God grows weary of great kingdoms, but never of little flowers.’

—*Rabindranath Tagore*



‘When the character of a man is not clear to you, look at his friends.’

—*Japanese proverb*



‘As I write these last words, my thoughts return to you who were my comrades, the stubborn and indomitable peasants of Nepal. Once more I hear the laughter with which you greeted every hardship. Once more I see you in your bivouacs or about your fires, on forced march or in the trenches now scorched by a pitiless and burning sun. Uncomplaining you endure hunger and thirst and wounds, and at the last your unwavering lines disappear into the smoke and wrath of battle. Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had a country more faithful friends than you.’

—*Sir Ralph Turner on the*

Gurkha soldiers



‘Old Derbyshire farmer, to a friend disappointed at not hearing a tame magpie talk: “No, he don’t say much, I’ll grant you that, but he’s a great one for thinking!”’

—The Countryman



No words heal better than the silent company of a friend.



‘Fondle them the first five years;
Beat them the succeeding ten:
On their cheeks when down appears,
Treat your sons as friend and men.’

—Tales of the Sarai



‘Who for any fault whatever Fosters his own body less?
Once a friend, a friend’s forever,
Howsoever he transgress.’

—*The Panchatantra*



‘If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.’

—*E.M. Forster*



Notes



‘Those who bring
sunshine
into the lives of others
cannot keep it from
themselves.’

—J.M. Barrie

Sometimes a grey-bearded old warrior comes up to me and says, 'Don't you remember me, Bond? We were at school together!' So were hundreds of other boys, and one cannot recall each one of them. We remember our close friends or those with whom we shared some memorable experience. 'Don't you remember?' he persists. 'We both got flogged for going to the cinema instead of attending Sunday school!' Instantly, I recall the occasion, and recognize my old school chum, and we go off together for a meal and chat about old times. Sixty years have passed, but it isn't difficult to renew our friendship. You have to have something in common. In our case, it was the caning we'd received from the headmaster.



'Shang ya!
I want to be your friend For ever and ever without break or decay.
When the hills are all flat And the rivers are all dry, When it lightens and
thunders in winter, When it rains and snows in summer,
When heaven and Earth mingle— Not till then will I part from you.'


—'Oath of Friendship', China



Many years ago, dear friend, we walked beside a little stream in the hills, gathering ferns. We collected a number of different ferns and pressed them in a scrapbook, which I put away in a drawer. Yesterday, looking for something else, I came across the scrapbook and opened it, to find the ferns in perfect condition— emblems of a friendship that came close to perfection.



'Spend the things you chiefly cherish— Wealth and life—to serve your friends. Both of these must surely perish; Let them perish for good ends.'

—Tales of the Sarai 

‘Camerado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money, I give you myself before
preaching or law; Will you give me yourself?
Will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?’

—*Walt Whitman*



‘One day,’ said the Persian poet Saadi, ‘I saw a rose bush surrounded by a tuft of
grass.

“What!” I cried, “Does that vile plant dare to place itself in the company of
roses?”

I was about to tear the grass away when it meekly addressed me, saying, “Spare
me! I am not the rose, it is true; but from my perfume any one can know at
least that I have lived with roses.”



Notes



On the road to DELHI I met a hundred

BROTHERS,

‘A fern beside the way we went
She plucked, and smiling, held it up,
While from her hand the wild, sweet scent
I drank as from a cup.’

—*John Greenleaf Whittier*



“Everyone to his own taste,” the old woman said when she kissed her cow.’

—*English country proverb*



‘You can’t stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you.
You have to go to them sometimes.’

—*A.A. Milne*



‘It requires a long time to know any one.’

—*Cervantes*



‘If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day so I
never have to live without you.’

—*A.A. Milne*



‘Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life.’

—*Mark Twain*



‘It’s the friends you can call up at 4 a.m. that matter.’

—*Marlene Dietrich*



‘I would rather walk with a friend in the dark, than alone in the light.’

—*Helen Keller*



‘Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It’s not something you learn in school. But if you haven’t learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven’t learned anything.’

—*Muhammad Ali*



‘How many slams in an old screen door? Depends how loud you shut it. How many slices in a bread?’

Depends how thin you
cut it. How much good inside a day? Depends how good you live 'em. How
much love inside a friend?

Depends how much you
give 'em.'

—*Shel Silverstein*



'Can miles truly separate you from friends... If you want to be with someone
you love, aren't you already there?'

—*Richard Bach*



'The best mirror is an old friend.'

—*George Herbert*



Notes



There is a
Destiny

that makes us
BROTHERS;
None goes his way alone:
All that we sent into the lives
of others,
Comes back into our own.'

—Edwin Markham

‘The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, not the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust you with a friendship.’

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



My friend Pitambar was found one night dancing in the middle of the road.

‘Why are you dancing in the road?’ I asked.

‘Because I am happy,’

he said.

‘And why are you

so happy?’

He looked at me as if I were a moron.

‘Because I am dancing in the road,’ he said.



‘If thou hast a loaf of bread, sell half and buy the flowers of the narcissus; for bread nourisheth the body, but the narcissus the soul.’

—Mohammed



All people live, not by reason of any care they have for themselves, but by the love for them that is in other people.’

—Leo Tolstoy



Friendship is all about doing things together.

It may be climbing a
mountain, fishing in a mountain stream, cycling along a country road, camping
in a forest
clearing or simply travelling together and sharing the experiences that a new
place can bring.



‘Anybody can sympathize with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very
fine nature to sympathize with a
friend’s success.’

—Oscar Wilde



‘Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship is a slow ripening fruit.’

—Aristotle



‘I don’t need a friend who changes when I change and who nods when I nod; my
shadow does that
much better.’

—Plutarch



There is no law that can replace goodwill.



‘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.’

—Charles M. Schulz



Notes



People are
lonely
because they
build

WALLS

instead of

BRIDGES

—Joseph F. Newton

There's a sweet little girl that lives down the lane, And she's so pretty and I'm
so plain,
She's clever and smart and all things good,
And I'm the bad boy of the neighbourhood.
But I'd be her best friend forever and a day
If only she'd smile and look my way.



We must love someone If we are to justify our presence on this earth.
We must keep loving all our days,
someone, anyone, anywhere outside our selves.



Happy is he whose heart sees more clearly than his eyes.



Ivy: You are friendship, fellowship and fidelity.
You stand for permanence.
Zinnia: You bring me thoughts of absent friends.

—*The Message of the Flowers*



'Perfect affection can only endure between man and beast. Between human
beings lurks always some antagonism.'

—*S.H. Kessels*



'Growing apart doesn't change the fact that for a long time we grew side by side;
our roots will always be tangled. I'm glad for that.'

—*Ally Condie*



‘A man without a smiling face must not open
a shop.’

—*Chinese proverb*



In a sense, every man and woman is an island. But life can be very lonely on our individual islands. We need to reach out, touch each other, feel the warmth of another personality, enjoy another’s company, recognize a kindred spirit — find a friend! And then, you are no longer an island.



‘On the whole, a tree is the most sympathetic object in nature, not so awfully set as the mountains, not so fickle and treacherous as the sea, more substantial than the clouds, not so perishable as the grass and flowers—always there, steadfast and strong, with its shifting lights and shadows, soft sighing or brisk tossing, or drenched brightness, seeming to enter into every mood of its friends.’

—*Ethel Daniels Hubbard*



‘Friendship is a sheltering tree,’ wrote Coleridge.

And how often we
compare friendship to a tree—steadfast, sturdy, comforting, ever present: until
we cut it down.



Blessed is the house upon whose walls
the shade of an old tree gently falls.



Notes



Age

appears to be best in four things;
OLD WOOD TO BURN,
OLD WINE TO DRINK,
OLD FRIENDS TO TRUST, AND
OLD AUTHORS TO READ.⁹

—Francis Bacon

'False friends are common.
Yes, but where

True nature links a
friendly pair,
The blessing is as rich as rare.'

—*The Panchatantra*



'I am fond of pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals.'

—*Winston Churchill*



Turn off your TV, Shut down your computer, Step out of your house, Make new friends!



'Wherever you go, go with all your heart.'

—*Confucius*



'Friend Butterfly Oh what a butterfly with beautiful colours!
I wish she'd come here And be my best friend.
I'd teach her how to count and read
And write, the way
Our teacher taught us.'

—*Rwandan children's song*



'A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere.'

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*



'Make this night loveable, Moon, and with eye single Looking down from up there,

Bless me One special And friends everywhere.'

Bless me, One especial And attends everywhere.

—W.H. Auden



One of the moving forces of our lives are meant to touch us briefly and go their way.



‘The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion will grow up together; and a little child will lead them.’

—Isaiah 11:6



Don't you see that that blessed conscience of yours is nothing but other people inside you?’

—Luigi Pirandello



‘I like trees because they seem more resigned to the way they have to live than other things do.’

—Willa Cather



Beyond the last inhabited place on earth, there are still friends: there are fish and birds and insects and shrubs, and the sun, the moon and stars.



‘In giving advice, seek to help, not please your friend.’

—Solon



‘Your only guard against the scourge of pomposity is the truth-telling of a

U U U U U U U

friend.’
—Jerry Pinto


Notes



“Don't walk behind me;
I may not lead.
Don't walk in front of me;
I may not follow.
JUST WALK BESIDE ME
AND BE MY

FRIEND.

—Albert Camus

The full moon keeps coming back again and again, but who complains?
It's like the visits of an old friend—always on time, and always welcome.



‘I will confess and I will not deny that the chief pleasure I know is the
contemplation of my fellow beings.’

—*Hilaire Belloc*



‘May God be praised for woman
That gives up all her mind, A man may find in no man A friendship of her
kind...’

—*W.B. Yeats*



‘If you meet a tiger and call him “Uncle”, he will let you pass unharmed.’

—*Tribal lore*



‘Love can be blind; friendship cannot; it owes it to itself not to be; and one can
even go as far as to like a friend’s shortcomings, but in order to help him
know them.’

—*Andre Gide*



‘Some people go to priests; others to poetry; I to my friends.’

—*Virginia Woolf*



The break of monsoon in the hot plains, the warmth of the winter sun in the hills,
a colourful sunset, a good book or film, the shade of a mighty tree, birdsong,
good fortune, the evening drink. These are sweet gifts of life, but sweeter
when they can be shared with a friend.



‘The pleasures of friendship are exquisite, How pleasant to go to a friend on a
visit!
I go to my friend, we walk on the grass,

And the hours and
moments like minutes pass.'

—*Stevie Smith*



'I can see my friends laughing and talking, but I cannot hear them. I live in a world of perpetual silence. But I know from their expressions that they are happy, and that they wish to share their joy with me.'

—*Letter from a deaf friend*



Friends can be helpful, but sometimes it is better to go alone. Real pioneers do not care whether or not they are followed; they go forward without looking back.



Your presence is
reassuring—like a firefly in the night.



Notes



'Only Connect!'

—E.M. Forster

‘Friendship is the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having
neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words.’

—*Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot)*



‘Food for one is enough for two.’

—*Tunisian proverb*



‘Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art... It has no survival value;
rather it is one of those things that give value to survival.’

—*C.S. Lewis*



When you find a true
friend, and keep him, you make friends with yourself.



‘The most I can do for my friend is simply to be his friend. I have no wealth to bestow on him. If he knows that I am happy in loving him, he will want no other reward. Is not friendship divine in this?’

—Henry Thoreau



‘If your friend is honey, do not lick him all up.’

—Tunisian proverb



‘I was angry with my friend: I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe: I told it not, my wrath did grow.’

—William Blake



‘A friend to all is a friend to none.’

—Aristotle



‘How else survive the heat of day to journey’s end?
How else if not with the cool shade of a thought of a friend?’

—Nasir Kazmi



‘A friend cannot be known in prosperity; an enemy cannot be hidden in
adversity.’

—*Elbert Hubbard*



‘Depth of friendship does not depend on length of acquaintance.’

—*Rabindranath Tagore*



‘One measure of friendship consists not in the number of things friends can discuss, but in the number of things they need no longer mention.’

—*Clifton Fadiman*



‘Friendship consists in forgetting what one gives, and remembering what one receives.’

—*Alexandre Dumas*



‘A friend without faults will never be found.’

—*Chinese proverb*



Notes



“What I cannot
Love,
I overlook.
Is that real
friendship?”

—Anais Nin

‘Whatever joy there is in this world

All comes from desiring
others to be happy,

And whatever suffering

there is in the world

All comes from desiring
only myself to be happy.'

—*Shantideva*



'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 Cummins*



'You can win more friends with your ears than you can with your mouth.'

—*Dale Carnegie*



'When Fate's stern hand shall close my weeping eye, And seal, at length, my
wand'ring spirit's doom;
Oh! may kind friendship
catch my parting sigh,

And cheer with hope the
terrors of the tomb.’

—*Mary Darby Robinson*



‘There is little friendship in the world, and least of all between equals.’

—*Francis Bacon*



It is said that you do not really know friends until you have shared misfortune
with them. An equally
good test would be to share days of great boredom
with them. If a friendship survives that, it is gold.’

—*Anonymous*



‘Choose one or two companions for thy life
But be as true, as thou
wouldst have thy wife.
Though he lives joyless,
that enjoys no friend,
He, that has many, pays
for ’t in the end.’

—*John Donne*



‘If you and I are no
different, what do we have to give each other? How
can we ever be friends?’

—*Christopher Isherwood*



‘Return to old watering holes for more than water; friends and dreams are
there to meet you.’

—*African proverb*



‘I might give my life for a friend, but he had better not ask me to do up a
parcel.’

—*Logan Pearsall Smith*



‘Honest good humour is the oil and wine of a merry meeting, and there is no
jovial companionship equal to that where the jokes are rather small and laughter
abundant.’

—*Washington Irving*



‘Locker-room bum—
umping never sustained a friendship. Grow up. When a friend is all the world to
you, tell him that.’

—*Terence Clout*



Notes



‘The child hand raised to reach the holding hand.
Hold the old holding hand. Hold and be held.’

—*Samuel Beckett*



‘Friendship is the finest balm for the pangs of despised love.’

—*Jane Austen*



‘He who removes fear from your mind is the greatest friend.’

—*Indian proverb*



‘As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.’

—*The Bible*



‘If I had my life to live over, I would have talked less and listened more. I would
have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the
sofa faded.’

—*Erma Bombeck*



‘Your closest friend is like the spouse you won’t divorce. To have both is the
best and most sensible adultery.’

—*Anonymous*



‘Once [a cat] has given its love, what absolute fidelity and affection! It will

make itself the companion of your hours of work, of loneliness, or of sadness. It will lie the whole evening on your knee, purring and happy in your company, and leaving the company of creatures of its own society to be with you.'

—*Theophile Gautier*



‘[Said the Fox:] “To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world...”’

—*Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*, *The Little Prince* ‘When to the session of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance of things past,

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time’s waste: ...
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend, All losses are restored and sorrows end.’

—*William Shakespeare*



‘I shot an arrow into the air, It fell to earth, I knew not where;
... I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
... Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.’

—*Henry W. Longfellow*



‘Across the boundaries of life and death
There you stand, O friend of mine.’

—*Rabindranath Tagore*



Every other man is a piece of myself, for I am a part of mankind.