

Who, or What, is a friend?

Friendship is a source of joy, comfort and security! We cherish it. It contributes to our happiness. It can develop immediately, at first contact. Or evolve gradually overtime. In like manner it can suddenly end. Or it can gradually wane overtime. When it ends, we feel sad, a loss, betrayed, and perhaps even anger.

But what exactly is friendship? Is it engendered by the physical relationship? Or is it a state of mind?

Perhaps the contrast between two most common types of relationships (friend versus acquaintance) may shed light on this question.

An acquaintance is someone you know casually, through a specific setting, while a friend is someone you share a deep, trusted, and personal emotional bond with

From this contrast, we see that: **deep emotional and trusting connections alone establishes friendship**. Therefore, familial or romantic relationships, contrary to what we would like to believe, are not automatically one of friendship!

Friendship exists only with the following:

- **Deeply shared core values** – i.e. the people involved have the same or very similar fundamental, non-negotiable beliefs and guiding principles that dictates how they think, behave, make decisions, and prioritize what matters most.
- **Mutual trust** – i.e.: the confident belief that each has the best interest of the other at heart, and will act with honesty and reliability, without guarding against betrayal
- **Reciprocal Support & Deep Commitment**: The relationship is a two-way exchange of care, empathy, and time. Also, because of shared core values and natural mutual trust, there is lower possibility of misunderstanding one another's actions or seeing them as betrayal. Ultimately, friendship places the attainment of a *goal* as paramount, with the readiness to consult and take into consideration each other's views and perspectives, without clinging to one's stand.

By contrast, acquaintanceship exists where

- Interactions happen mostly in a single environment, like work, school, or a shared hobby.
- Conversations stay light, polite, and focused on general topics.
- One does not share deep values or goals.
- Contact is based on convenience or sharing of mutual contacts.
- One would not call on the other in an emergency, or help in the middle of the night

What is mentioned thus far is not unknown to the average person, nor does it shed any new light on the subject, for most people.

However, many are unaware of the Spiritual laws at work behind every human interaction and experience. These laws govern the approach, or crossing of paths that bring about a relationship

that we call friendship or acquaintance. They also determine the nature and intensity of the relationship/experience, as well as their maintenance or extinction.

These laws guide or propel us into environments or situations where these relationships are then formed. Regardless of whether the relationship is one that we have consciously chosen, or we believe that we stumbled upon. The same laws propel us into situations or relationships that we would not choose for ourselves, but whose experiences are necessary for the maturing of our Spirit.

The Spiritual Principles behind Friendship

In a previous article titled *Crossing of Paths – Fate and Opportunity for Forgiveness*, we explored the Spiritual principles governing intimate relationships in our lives, and, for most people, the unknown spiritual purpose of these relationships.

Briefly, that article explained that Human interactions are not random occurrences. Rather, they are governed by the Spiritual *Law of Cycles* and the *Law of Reciprocal Action*. These principles ensure we cross paths with those we need to collaborate with, or need to resolve outstanding issues. For example, to collaborate on activity that would benefit society or humankind, regardless of area. Thus, the field of activity may be temporal or spiritual.

The article also explained that a conscious memory of the purpose of the crossing of paths is usually suppressed because the brain can only store memories from the activities and experiences in which its particular body is involved. However, all deeply felt experiences penetrate to the core of our being (i.e. Spirit) and is retained in our subconscious memory. This core is the real human being, whose existence spans beyond any lifetime on earth. The Spirit grows and matures through the experiences that have penetrated to its core.

This subconscious memory occasionally bursts through to the conscious mind, and accounts for the inner feeling evoked when we come across some people. The burst through also explains the inexplicable Chemistry/strong attraction or dread/antagonism we sense at such encounters.

Thus, these spiritual laws that govern the crossing of paths allow us to forge the necessary relationships we need to fulfill a Spiritual purpose.

That feeling of instant connection reflects the subconscious recognition of shared core values, and perhaps previous comradeship, that engenders a level of trust and complete relaxation with the person. Something that we find inexplicable.

There is also another principle at work regarding our core values. This is the spiritual law of Homogeneity, reflected in the common saying:

"Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are". Or, "Show me your friends and I'll show you your future".

The variations of this common saying clearly capture the key elements of the definition of friendship; namely: shared core values, and joint activity.

Even where the initial reaction at an encounter is one of dread, a deeper knowledge of the Spiritual laws reveals that such crossing of paths offers an opportunity to correct a past failure or neglect. Particularly in this situation, one can readily see the love and wisdom inherent in the temporary suppression of past memories that are buried in the subconscious.

The suppression gives us a chance to build the necessary new relationship on a clean slate, to enable the redemptive opportunity that requires the joint activities through which we need to rebuild trust and reliance, in order to overcome past errors or held grievances.

Through successful working together this time, we learn to “forgive” and mature through the new experiences gained. Thus, there is always a helpful regenerative opportunity where one senses an inexplicable combination of dread and attraction at a crossing of paths.

This section will be incomplete without some reflection on the dissonance evident in many intimate relationships, that one expects to have all of the characteristics of true friendship. For example, in marriages, intimate, or familial relationships. The marked absence of this in such relationships is a good indication that, though paths have crossed for a regenerative purpose, outbursts of subconscious memories of past wrongs are being triggered by current situations that suggest a repetition of the past. This results in a feeling of uncertainty, and an unconscious fear of another betrayal. Or lack of commitment, which eventually leads to distrust. The person thus affected becomes reticent about the relationship. And the friendship that clearly existed and flourished during what is generally called the *honey-moon period* soon dies, starved by the withdrawal of trust and continued commitment to the regenerative objective of the tie, because of an unwillingness to forgive.

The one whose action triggers the outburst of negative subconscious memories is equally guilty. Because the regenerative opportunity offered by the crossing of paths is for the person to learn to control and overcome actions that suggest or indicate disloyalty. But where all parties involved are spiritually aware and committed, goodwill can help them work through these challenges through the exercise of patience and forgiveness by one, and consideration and self-control by the other.

Another situation where we generally expect friendship is between, or among people who once had a bond in their youth. For example, childhood friends, or parent child relationship.

The same spiritual laws apply here. Therefore, if the elements of friendship remain as the parties’ transition into adulthood, the quality of the bond will be transformed from that of dependence

in the case of parent and child, or camaraderie, between children, into one of friendship between adults. If the requisite elements are absent, a friendship will naturally not exist, in spite of all outward appearances presented. Any continued attempt to enforce friendship only becomes burdensome and a source of irritation to the one who sees this attempt as an imposition. Ignorance of the spiritual laws is the reason for this well-meant but burdensome wish.

Ending or waning of friendship

The end or ending of any relationship can be painful or agonizing, as signs of its deterioration becomes evident.

But even here, there are spiritual laws operating. Two other laws are generally in operation here. The first is the Law of Motion, which compels continual activity for anything to be maintained or sustained. According to this law, the decrease in intensity of activity inevitably leads to a change in direction, because nothing can ever remain motionless. With the decline of intensity in activity, the next strongest desire (urgings) within the Spirit receives increased energy to now dictate the primary direction of new activity. Therefore, it becomes easy to see how a slight unspoken, or unrecognized change in a core value, upon which the relationship is built, will gradually or immediately make it difficult to maintain or sustain the friendship.

In such scenario, the one whose core values have not changed, usually becomes perplexed. They may begin to wonder whether the affection, effort, and loyalty are still mutual. They may also be reluctant to immediately voice these concerns, seeing that as an expression of an unfounded mistrust of the other.

The one whose values are changing may not even be aware, and the raising of concern by the other can be interpreted as an unfounded mistrust by the one asking. Where they have become conscious of a change in their core values, they may be reluctant to acknowledge this change, especially if the change is seen as a negative direction. And so, the relationship will continue to wobble slowly toward the inevitable breakdown, because of the enforced change in direction that the law of Motion will eventually compel. Meanwhile, the Spirits involved will experience the pain caused by the disappointment in their inability to attain the spiritual purpose that the laws of cycle and reciprocal action had woven for the ultimate purpose of offering them an opportunity for the maturing of their spirit.

Therefore, the agonizing experience, or pain, that one feels at a premature end of a relationship holds a much deeper spiritual significance than is given to it by modern social attitudes or theories or therapies on how to overcome or cope with the pain. For example, the **Social Exchange & Equity theory** views termination of *a bond as a rational way to stop a drain on personal resources, freeing the individual's social capacity for healthier connections*. This is purely focused on the

material, and very transactional. **The Attachment Theory & Disengagement Pathways**, though focused on the material, draws attention to *self-blame and persistent rumination because of the lack of closure*. This observation is the emotional (spirit's) recognition of guilt and disappointment in failing in its commitment to attain the goal that it needed, through the relationship, for its own spiritual maturity. And which attainment would have brought benefit to all of mankind.

Some may consider the last statement as presumptuous and an overstatement. But again, knowledge of the laws of Creation shows that everything in the universe is connected and has a reciprocal effect on each other. This fact is being confirmed in the discipline of Quantum Mechanics. And Jesus alluded to its spiritual aspect 2000 years ago, when he said, in **Matthew 25:40**:

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Through the teachings of The Grail Message, we now understand that embedded in this parable is a hint about the spiritual connectivity of all. Therefore, whatever is done to benefit one person has a permeating effect in the spiritual ether, to cause a corresponding effect on all.

This too is a law of Creation that works equally for positive or negative actions.

So, what about those situations where the spiritual goal is attained, should the relationship continue?

Again, the laws that worked to bring about the crossing of paths to forge the relationship will naturally determine what happens next. But even here, the laws bring the individual only that which he or she desires or feels urged. This is regardless of whether we are consciously aware of those desires or not.

This stresses the importance of one being attuned to their inner desires because, like it or not, the law of motion will energize the desire, triggering the laws of homogeneity and reciprocal action to weave the paths that will lead to the realization of the desire. This will naturally occur in the new environment and relationships required to bring about the necessary spiritual experiencing.

Conclusion

This quote from The Grail Message gives succinct summary on the subject dealt with in this article.

A single individual cannot offer you perfection, but the whole of humanity, with all its varied characteristics, may do so! Each individual has something which is

definitely part of the whole. And this is also why one so far advanced as no longer to know any earthly desires loves all mankind, not one individual, because only the whole of mankind can make the strings of his mature soul, laid bare through purification, sound the chord of heavenly harmony. He bears the harmony within himself, because all strings vibrate!

Abdrushin. - Lecture: Silence, Volume 1, "In The Light of Truth"

Final Word

Jesus's admonition to *Love thy neighbor as thyself* creates a dilemma for some who interpret it to mean that a good Christian, or one striving for spiritual maturity should be friends with everyone. Including one's professed enemies.

So let us use the facts presented in this article, to try to gain an understanding of this admonition based on the laws of Creation, as reviewed earlier.

Surely, an enemy is not likely to manifest any of the elements that define a friend. Therefore, the demand to show and practice love to them does not mean that they must necessarily become a friend.

The injunction is simply against causing harm to anyone, intentionally. And, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan, to be ready to offer help where it will be beneficial, and will foster their spiritual development.

Thus, Jesus' injunction does not entail forcibly forging personal relationships.

The spiritual laws weave the crossing of paths that contain their own specific purpose. The onus is on us to develop the intuitive ability to sense this purpose.

When we impute more or less than the laws intend, we create unnecessary ties that could hamper our spiritual growth, because we are not ready for the resulting self-enforced ties. For example, a genuine desire to help a reprobate by becoming their friend could expose one to currents to which they succumb because they have not yet developed the inner strength to face up to the seen and unseen forces in the ethereal environment of the reprobate.

With such misguided desire to help, the personal decision punctures a hole in one's natural protective spiritual shield. And in accordance with the law governing man's freewill, the person is then compelled to experience the consequences of their decision.

Therefore, friendship or friend is a concept not to be taken lightly because it involves significant spiritual ties. It is in recognition of this fact that many ancient languages reserved certain words

for communication between friends. Words which, where they still exist today, are seen as only representing a difference in the level of politeness in communication. Examples of these are, Thou versus You, in old English. Vous versus Tu, in French, and Sie versus Du, in German.