

Friendships – to live and to take care of

A friend is a gift that we give to ourselves, Robert Louis Stevenson

Dear Reader,

Thinking of Friendship, who comes immediately into your mind? What is it that you value (appreciate) most in this relationship?

To me, my girlfriend Mary, from the United States comes to my mind. Unfortunately Mary passed away ten years ago. This friendship was so precious because we had an open ear for each other, we shared our sorrow and the joy of our achievements, for example the wonder of my son's birth.

And if something went wrong, we took time to work it out, until we could laugh again.

After returning to Switzerland with my family, Mary and I took time for long telephone conversations, especially after my girlfriend, at the age of 36, was diagnosed with Hodgkins Disease.

Distance was not a problem – in talks and visits giving meant at the same time receiving. Once my girlfriend shared her worries and at the end of the phonecall she said: Listening to me, can you imagine how boring it is for me to live together with myself!? – We both laughed.

Nevertheless her remark has changed something within myself. It is the conviction that it is very important to be a close friend of oneself. To listen to what is inside not only to hear the others, to respect and to take care of oneself even though this can mean to reprimand oneself. In this way new learning occurs and there will be time for praise again.

In friendship with oneself also means being friends with his partner and to enjoy old and new relationships. Particularly in Spring when life germinates! With this thought I am looking forward to the upcoming class reunion of Middle School, when I will see my first big love again and chat with the old schoolmates of our worries and joys.

In everyday life we make friends with people that share our interests f.e. children of the same age or in Tennis etc. Friendships can also grow with a common project/task, with people with whom "we sit in the same boat". It is never too late. In my work for the Community Church that I began one year ago I have made good friends. I am very grateful.

Which ones are your male and female friends? Did you recognize all of them? Also yourself? It is a gift to be a friend and it makes us fortunate.