

ITâ??S NICE TO HAVE GOOD FRIENDS

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(As it happened, the blessed part of many of my life episodes is that very generous friends favored me. They are very compassionate lot.)

BANK REPAYMENT TENSIONS

The anxiety in me has risen to unbearable levels. The thin line of day and night got merged into an inseparable stretch of agonizing stress.

Staring with the red-rimmed eyes at the ceiling, lying alone on the bed, I dimly reflected, â??Can I mobilize the money to pay to the bankers, to keep up my promise. Or if I fail, should I consent to the auction of my ancestral property as proposed by bank officials.â?• Thoughts are hitting hard and fast not allowing me a wee line of space to find a workable solution.

I was allowed seven daysâ?? time to make up my mind to surrender the property. Or else pool the money to pay the balance loan. My request, â??I needed three monthsâ?? period to settle whatever the dues.â?? â??No we definitely wouldnâ??tâ?? was the bankâ??s stubborn stand. The impasse had almost given me a heart attack.

I had no idea how I should come out of this financial crisis and save my property. I didnâ??t know whom I should approach to bargain on my side with the bank officials.

A CALL TO MY FRIENDS

Devastated and desperate I called on two of my friends. And earnestly put across my dilemma, â??can you please speak to the bankers and help me out.â??

Indeed, I received the prompt intervention, and tactful negotiations, by my two college friends. They saved my day and my public image.

A month earlier the situation never seemed giving me any relief. Iâ??m nervously aware that my emotional strength to endure the strain was draining out each day. Were it not for my good comrades; I wouldnâ??t have survived the deadlock.

Later I paid back my entire loan. Iâ??m at ease today that I wouldnâ??t dread to pick up the phone of any bank official.

These days I heartily recall it was the good friends who diffused the tension which was ticking in me like a time bomb. I remembered that awful bunch as if they were all in the close conspiracy. They are no less than my relatives, my family members, acquaintances, and associates. They all deserted me with a mocking hint, â??you have dug your financial grave, and you bury yourself.â?? All I have borrowed money from the banks to construct a new school building.

Right now Iâ??m free and peaceful because my college mates came up with a miracle. At the time of grave need: sacrifice, and affection; the concern to bail me out is the real help.

Dear friends, â??you are my safety, you are love, like an anchor I hold on to you. But for your mediation, I wouldnâ??t have lived to see another bright dayâ??.

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MY SHORTCOMINGS

I could never fathom the reason, why, but from my school days, I depended much on peers even for minor matters. As trivial as asking permission for a movie I expected one of my school-mate would step in and speak to my dad.

Curiously, my mind acts numb and refuses to take quick moves when Iâ??m on my own; no one out there to support me. I never affirmed myself when I need to take action even in serious situations. It has been my severe shortcoming which I regret even today. The defect didnâ??t diminish even in my fag end days of retirement.

I have yet to learn why my mental faculties fall loose the moment I bump myself facing troubled situations. I shrink, I become hesitant, and as if swept clean my mind stays empty of ideas. Iâ??m dazed yet to know why I grew up with this frail psyche. Iâ??m never mentally self-reliant, always dependent upon few friends for one reason or other. As it happened, the blessed part of many of my life episodes is that very generous friends favored me. They are a very compassionate lot.

I always mourned why problems stick to me for a long time. That made me a habitual runner, to rush to ask for help. I canâ??t wait like calling my pals over the phone and insisted a few minutes of their time. The topics varied from, â??my son is not doing well, bank people are harassing me, and Iâ??m insulted by so and so, family complexities, financial doldrums.â?? And, at times, quite desperately, I would whine â??is there any hope I would come out safely.â??

Thus I ended up calling my well-wishers more frequently, than anyone I knew, wanting to listen to my endless petitions. If I could reach a helpful ear, if Iâ??m allowed to pour out, even briefly, I would breathe easy. And â??I start thinking with a clear mind of how I would solve this issue at hand.â?? I try for a mental massage before I say to myself, â??set go.â??

Though I overwhelmingly sought the support of my good acquaintances, I followed a few practices. Iâ??m careful with my manners, my courtesies, and my language too. I never allowed any grain of misunderstanding to creep in between our rapport. If I detected any hint of discord, I would jump in with all eagerness to clarify and smooth down the issue right away. I believed when the principles of friendships are transparent the support that followed would be magically strong.

I ALWAYS WAITED FOR HELP

I never decided a good companion as an instant personal machine to oblige to act. And react quickly and respond to my calls. Though I knew, they are intimate to me. I wouldnâ??t expect them to keep a tag of my vagaries and wishes. Cautiously, I obeyed my limitations not to trespass the friendly freedom allowed to me.

At the same time, I craved: my only human weakness when I go out and call a friend. I wait for a while and wished for a cheerful tone and feel. To one solemn voice speaking, â??Iâ??m there for you when you need something, no matter what or when.â?•My goodness, this is enough to please my mind to dash and dance, and I would work through any issues easily. You see a few of my simple fancies.

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MY PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

In thirty years of my professional roller-coaster ride, I earned a few close friends who allowed a solemn vibe for my brittle psyche. Given my many rough days, I built up as many emotional life-lines as support that held out by them. And when going was bumpy, and times were unendurable; I saw them as my mental shock-absorbers.

At times Iâ??m at the receiving end when I suffered bitterly at the discriminating gags. I came across in some engagements with a few odd friends. In such restrains, I advised myself, â??I can calmly choose to stay aloofâ?? and patiently pull away, concluding, â??this is my status in my friends view and not to respond is his prerogative.â?• I gently learned if I seek out for the best, sometimes, I should be ready to absorb rude shocks of behavior and withstand the blows of rejection.

Nevertheless, in all these years, this is what I have gained about my friendships. â??That they are there, and on any day for sureâ?¦..they would stand by meâ?•. A very consoling promise.

A cold shoulder and often a prolonged silence of friends, like a lover who got hurt, found me disturbed and worried. The rift also saw me sinking with hollow feelings. Slowly, I started looking at them with a wider and realistic perspective. Eventually, this is what I have compiled.

MY DEFINITION OF GOOD FRIENDSHIP

Never consider a good friend as a security wall dependably covering for your warts and all. In a gathering storm, they are like a lighthouse â?? firm, strong, and tall and offer us flashes of hope; but they wouldnâ??t swim to reach us. They give only directions to safety and strength. Having such tall and dependable friends I consider a lifetime gift. My job, sooner or later, itâ??s like going on a survey to find the security that in my long journey along the coast of life, how many lighthouses Iâ??m confident to meet.

The likelihood of lighthouses we come across in our life is because of many selfless acts that we had laid in the past. If I lament that I havenâ??t received any help, I have to assume that, my attitude has been indifferent. Or I have looked down on, perhaps, to someone from whom Iâ??m now seeking some respite. Plainly said, if we readily help others, we find others too ready to help us.

I have accepted, with a pinch of salt, the fact; it is easy to conclude â??how harsh is the silence of my friendsâ?• in times of hard days.

But with hordes of past experiences, I have grown inwardly to understand the essence of human relationships. I presumed it as delicately fragile and often a fluid state of affairs. Any wrong move the link is likely to evaporate at a tick.

In my long wishful quest, I benefited largely from a couple of friends. They are generous enough to share my pains and touch my wounds. Iâ??m truly delighted that my cup of relief is full. I grew optimistic when the graceful souls stood by me. They worked about bigheartedly attempting to sort out my issues as far as their available resources allowed. And Iâ??m grateful enough to acknowledge how liberally my friends have guided me. Toleratingâ??a difficult character like me.

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After years of trials and tribulations, trust and disappointments, one raw truth dawned upon me; how great friendships truly works.

In the arena of my daily grinding, unpleasant encounters, Iâ??m aware of a few good men Iâ??m surrounded by, whom I trust most. They were there all the time: friends waiting at the ringside. I find them clapping their silent words of encouragement. Wishing me, I do my best to help myself. I can see them unconditionally within my reach watching me. And willingly waiting if the need demands they could step in. What a soothing inspiration to live by.

My good friends have taught me to understand the real role of true friendship. Itâ??s like oxygen â?? life-saving, life-giving, and life-long. But the moment I donâ??t value and play fault distancing them. Iâ??m as good as deserted, forever. After four decades of the eventful personal voyage. I confess and appreciate my dear friendâ??s strong presence in my life and further warmly in my heart!

(I thank my two buddies DVR Krishna Mohan and K. Guru Murthy; who brought meaning and joy to the journey of our friendship. We are the alumni of Bapatla Agricultural College, Andhra Pradesh, India)

Category

1. Uncategorized

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