

Letters to Young People - 'Not Talking Anymore!'

by [Gary Young](#) on Friday, October 29, 2010 at 1:29pm

It always amazes me when you see a couple of friends – or perhaps I should say former friends – who aren't talking to one another any more. Occasionally this is the case because of a long and slow breakdown in the relationship between them, but more often than not the breakup seems to have occurred quite suddenly, and brought an apparently abrupt end to what most would have thought was an enduring friendship. It seems a great pity that a relationship that both people seemed to get a great deal of support and encouragement from has just disappeared and been replaced by animosity and, in some cases at least, by outright hatred.

How and why does this happen? After all, aren't friendships supposed to be enduring, aren't they supposed to be one of the things we can rely upon when all else in our lives seems to be going wrong? Well, yes, they are. And no, friendships, REAL friendships, shouldn't end like that at all.

Often, if we care to probe into the reasons for these sorts of breakups, we find that it is all over some trivial affair, an argument that the two friends had over something or other that is by now completely irrelevant. Something someone said, an ill-timed comment, an angry outburst or whatever. And an apparently strong friendship dissolves in tatters, seemingly overnight.

Clearly, something is wrong in that friendship for things to go that way. That is assuredly NOT the way friendships are supposed to be... a true friend is someone you can rely upon at all times and in all situations, not someone who is going to dump you over some stupidity or other:

A man that has friends must show himself friendly, and there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18: 24).

That's the sort of friend we should look for, and, importantly, that is the sort of friend we ought to BE. I know I've used that verse before, but it's one of my favourites and I'm sure it's fairly obvious why that is.

One of the things that is often lacking from friendships that implode in the way we've been talking about is the quality of maturity. We know that little children

squabble and have fights, but we also notice that very soon afterward the fight is forgotten, and the kids are back to being friends again. With teens and adults, unfortunately, we seem sometimes to squabble like children but then bear grudges like adults! We need to have the maturity to recognise a little matter for what it is – an irrelevancy that should not be allowed to affect an important relationship in our lives.

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also should you (Colossians 3: 13).

We need to cultivate those qualities of forgiveness and forbearance, remembering that we too have faults and that we need people to show those qualities toward us from time to time too! To forgive someone means that, when we have an argument with them, we should put it aside as soon as we can. Especially if they are sorry about the argument, who are we to continue to hold a grudge about it? And, no, I don't mean that we should expect a 'formal apology' from them, or expect them to jump through hoops to satisfy our anger! If they show by their actions and their renewed friendliness towards us that they are sorry, maybe we ought to just swallow our pride and arrogance, and value their friendship more than our ego! Do you like it when someone expects you to 'grovel in the dust' to regain their acceptance? Hardly. A true friendship is worth way more than our anger and pride; don't sacrifice your friendship to your ego.

Forbearance is another quality that is mentioned in the verse I used earlier: this is a quality we need to have, and our friends need to have it too! It refers to the way in which we overlook the little faults and annoyances that our friends might have, and of course that we ourselves have too! We all get annoyed and irritated over things that our friends might do from time to time, and we in all probability do things that annoy and irritate them too! Forbearance is the ability to just overlook those things, the quality that helps us to see that those things are simply not worth fighting over, not worth losing a friend over. If we want to have good friends, we need to BE a good friend, and forbearance is one of those things that will help us to do both!

Friendship is one of the most beautiful things in this world, one of the very best experiences that life has to offer. Without friends our lives can be dull and meaningless, but with them even the most mundane things can become joyful and fulfilling. Don't lose your friends over trivialities: be the kind of friend who forgives and forbears, the kind in whom your friends can trust and rely, and know that you aren't going anywhere. Be the friend that, in the words of the Proverb, sticks closer than a brother.

