

and other arenas where people gather. It enhances the growth, and accomplishment of any individual or group brought together for a common goal. It is a special bond. People need each other. They need time to discuss and explore the development, dynamics and growth enhancing qualities of friendships!

FORGIVENESS

Young people have taught me the power of forgiveness. My religious experiences paved the way, but it was students who discovered and taught the power of forgiveness. Occasionally, relationships hurt and disappoint. Forgiveness teaches us to look past the hurt and move to a new place where we see the powerful value of the relationship. Kids have to understand the need to forgive. Forgiving people, who have caused pain, opens the door to a life we can call our own.

Forgiveness is an enemy to isolation. Tell Kids, they must know, life is better with a friendship. Relationships are more rewarding than allowing hurt to push people away. My students have taught me to understand the hurt imposed by others and the damaging effect it can have on life. Every single day, they confront hurt, in order to understand it and its potential to cause more harm. My students continue to reach for forgiveness. They forgive the very people who caused them pain. Forgiveness, that supports their desire to be free of internal confusion, anger and fear. A heroic forgiveness, to any Adult Authority that violated their identity development. They taught me that if they do not forgive, they would not move on. They will stay imprisoned in their own state of confusion, helplessness, anger and isolation. They will never reach a life powered by their natural state of love. As you probably know, these Kids are amazing!

Trish is the epitome of a loving, caring, nurturing soul. Totally engrossed with the care of others. Dedication and devotion cannot come close to describe her passion. For Trish, her time was not a career; it was a mission, a purpose. She was there for kids who struggle. Kids with few options. The disenfranchised, disenfranchised, damaged from a loveless family. Trish was there for them.

It happens, time moves on. Trish looked at something she rarely thought about...her self. For the first time in a long time, Trish had a self-need she took time to look at. This was a new experience. What was the need? What was this need saying? How does she address this need? How long will it take to find out what it is?

In time, Trish discovered she wanted a friend. That revelation left her exhausted. How do you go about finding a friend who will listen, share the same ideas, care as much as she, about the things she cared about. Trish knew the answer before she journeyed. Nobody can fit that list. Trish threw herself into this search the only way she knew, intense focus, devotion and passion. She came up short. Nothing there. Trish was alone.

Alex shared the same spot as Trish but, did not know it. Occasionally, their paths crossed since graduating from the same high school. He shared little of her world. He was consumed with the same intense desire to have an impact on others, but in the arena of technology. He was immersed in plastics during the day. On his own time, he devoted his efforts to alternative fuels for energy. Often, Alex spoke of the opportunity we have to separate from our dependence on foreign oil. His intensity did not allow for a normal conversation. It was listen and nod. As much as Alex had to offer, it was wasted on his inability to get people to listen and engage with him. Alex was alone.

So far, pretty sad. But, there is a happy ending. It started at a high school reunion. Yes, they met. Yes, they both spoke with passion. Yes, neither listened. Yes, they left separate with no plans to meet again...until Trish, walking to her car, felt sorry for Alex. He was alone. She never thought of her own aloneness, but that was her pattern...true to form, she reached out to a person in need.

Without hesitation she walked over to Alex and asked if he wanted to meet for coffee. They met, she listened, and so he talked more and more and more. Trish was not naturally interested in anything he was saying but she pretended...until he touched on the

part about reducing military intervention if we were less dependent on oil.

This was new and attractive. This played into her sense of living and purpose. Less kids spilling blood on foreign land played into her sense of purpose and passion. Without knowing it, Alex had connected with Trish. They discovered, by accident, a common ground filled with emotion.

Now it was time for Alex to listen. Trish was filled with questions and Alex had answers. He could hardly complete a thought without Trish tossing another question. Two people speaking passionately about a shared interest...attractive!

They discovered something amazing! When a common ground had been found, their process for passion, dedication and devotion became attractive. When that process centered on a very common interest, they became a team. Together, they formed a non-profit group dedicated to informing the public of a perceived political stonewall surrounding our countries selfish desire to keep oil as the status quo while putting our military, young boys, in harms way... needlessly. Whether accurate or not, a shared belief propelled them forward.

Trish and Alex are still together. This time, it is not an accident. They are in love and their same process of devotion and passion are poured into their daughter. They love her! They have served so many others well. Many, they have met and others they will never know. It all started with paying attention to self. Trish had the courage to explore what she was feeling and put her wants, needs, and goals to action. Though, she met failure, she never stopped. After all, she attended a high school re-union. Trish allowed her normal desire to help others push toward asking Alex for coffee. She forced herself to listen to a person who made little attempt to offer the same gift, listen. As their connection developed, he was motivated to mirror her gift. Alex gave, what she so desperately sought, to be heard, listened to, appreciated, and loved.

When throwing ourselves into different arenas we often discover happiness. Trish discovered Alex's desire for energy independence could serve her needs of protecting youth from needless harm. She believed our military was often misused and youth paid a needless price. True or not, that is what she believed. From her belief she found a connection to Alex. Only time invested into paying attention to others could create an opportunity for such a discovery.

Trish's courage to pay attention to herself, fortitude to realize her goal, find a common connection, develop a relationship and encourage others is a story that still inspires others. Staying true to herself, she asked I not use her name. If you met her, it would take no time at all to appreciate her love for all. Inspired by love, anything is possible!