FROM INTERNATIONAL PILOT
to AUTHOR, COACH & SPEAKER

GROWING FORWARD

with Charlotte Hillenbrand



THE GIFT OF HONEST FRIENDSHIP

As adults, friendship doesn't just happen. It has to be cultivated.

So how do we make meaningful new friendships as adults, not just acquaintances that we catch up with for laughs and good times, but friendships that let us share the hard times too?

We must actively create opportunities to spend time doing meaningful activities together. Research from the University of Kansas reveals it takes 200+ hours to form close friendships. That's 200+ hours of quality leisure time talking, laughing, sharing experiences and doing enjoyable things together, not just time being in the same environment.

Starting to invest that time, with an open heart and an open mind, may be one of the most rewarding investments we ever make.

With heartfelt intention, what starts as small talk can grow into a space where it is safe to share not just the laughs but the lows as well. But that only happens if we are not afraid of showing, and seeing, each other's tears and vulnerabilities, and of giving and accepting support and guidance.

We often think about this from the aspect of letting our own guard down, but I think it is just as important and valid to consider the other side; the fact that we have to be prepared to receive the vulnerabilities confided to us.

It takes a certain kind of person to keep their nerve and stay close by in the times when a strong person is no longer strong.

At its deepest, that level of friendship gives us permission to tell each other even difficult truths.

Support says "I'm here for you".

Truth says "I love you too much to let you keep believing that".

It's easy to think that the progression of friendship, then, is from companionship to vulnerability to truth. I think the deeper progression is from acceptance to trust to growth.

Truth sees your blind spots, challenges your excuses, and tells you when you're hiding. Truth reminds you who you are when you have forgotten.

If we're lucky, we have people around us who will comfort us. If we're even luckier, we have people who will lovingly challenge us. The latter are priceless.

I treasure those friendships because they don't simply make life more enjoyable; they make me a better person. They celebrate with me, stand beside me when I fall apart, and when I need it most, they tell me the truth.

Difficult truths become less difficult to hear when spoken with love by a trusted friend who has my best interests at heart. And wonderful truths become even more meaningful when spoken by someone who knows just how important it is to me!

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