

Goodbye, Adieu, Farewell, Adios, Bye Bye, Later, Toodles, Peace Out, I'm Out, Later Gator, Stay in Touch, Catch You on the Flip Side, Godspeed, Gotta Run, See You Around.

There are so many ways to say goodbye. Why? Because it's something we do so often in life. The bad news is that we are limited in how much time we get to spend with some people. The good news is that we are limited in how much time we get to spend with some people.

There are many types of relationships we experience in life: friends, co-workers, leaders, followers, teammates, spouses, family members, teachers, students, bosses, employees, or even that special someone who may be more someday. These relationships affect us and motivate us in different ways. We often get so wrapped up in these relationships that we forget the most important one: our relationship with ourselves. My hope is that by examining the nature of relationships and reflecting on past experiences, you'll soon see why it's so important to stay true to yourself and let other relationships take a backseat while you drive.

All relationships end because at some point, we end. None of us will live forever, and because of that, our relationships are impermanent by nature. Many relationships fade away long before we do; we continue living, but the relationship is effectively over.

Think about when you were in middle school. Who did you hang out with? Who were your friends? Try to remember how important it was to fit in, to impress people. How embarrassed and distraught were you when something cringeworthy happened? Do you even remember their names now? Do you ever look back and think, "Why did I even care? Why did I waste part of my childhood worrying about the opinions of people I can't even remember?"

"It never ceases to amaze me: we all love ourselves more than other people, but care more about their opinion than our own."

— Marcus Aurelius

But you grew up. You got older and wiser. You realized you were just a kid and those middle school relationships were temporary. You moved on to real life; you moved on to high school. Do you remember who was cool and who was an outcast? Were you on a sports team and wanted the coach to think highly of you? Were you a teacher's favorite? Was it important to be the smartest in class? Do you remember your first crush and how you'd do anything to get their attention or approval? Did you ever do anything foolish during those years, something you regret now, just to fit in or impress someone? Where are all those important people now? When's the last time you thought about them?

That's how life and relationships go. Each time we say goodbye, we move on. On some level, we understand those relationships were temporary. The importance fades, and we realize it was foolish to care so much about others' opinions. We regret our negative reactions or out-of-character actions. Looking back, we see we wasted a lot of time, energy, and worry trying to fit in with people or impress people we no longer know.

Regret comes when we betray ourselves, when we compromise our relationship with ourselves for the sake of our relationships with others. When we value others' opinions of us more than our own, it becomes a hollow victory, even if we manage to be the most popular or well-liked. You're no longer that person, and those who approved or disapproved of you aren't the same people anymore either. It doesn't matter anymore because the relationships are gone.

The only relationship that stays with you is the one with yourself. (your self-respect, self-worth, and self-image.)

“When someone is properly grounded in life, they shouldn't have to look outside themselves for approval.”

– Epictetus

Now, take a look at your life today. Are there people you want to impress? Co-workers you want to fit in with? A reputation to maintain? A boss you're eager to please? Is there someone who criticizes you and makes you feel bad?

Can you look into the future and see yourself retiring one day? Imagine your future self looking back to where you are now. Can you see how that version of you might view your current thoughts and behavior in the same light as you now view your middle-school self? Can you

realize that most of your current relationships are temporary and that the only lasting one is the relationship with yourself?

You're going to say goodbye to most of the people in your life. You'll forget many of their names and why their opinions mattered to you. One day, it will be clear that many of your current worries and concerns were trivial. You have the option to realize this now. You can walk through life armed with this knowledge, and with that wisdom, you can act in ways that maintain your character and self-respect.

Being aware of this helps limit regret, poor decisions, worry, and anxiety. So, say goodbye to a lot of the negatives in life by realizing that you'll eventually say adios to most of the people in your life.

With that said, there will be some people in your life who are in it for the long haul. Those people and your relationship with them will benefit from this perspective. They will have a version of you in their life that is self aware, and making good decisions. They will also get the best of your attention, since you will chose them over the temporary relationships.

In closing, I'll steal a goodbye line from the great philosopher Micky Mouse: "See ya real soon"

Amor Fati

-Sgt. Steve