



## Soul Cafe: A Vitamin Named Friends

Exercise, yoga, talk-therapies, and other tried and tested formulae often top the list of action items to take care of mental wellbeing amidst life's unending lineup of challenges and tasks.

Let us find out if the benefits from a certain vitamin called "Friends" can outweigh all these options.

### Who Is Our Go-To?

Before we proceed, who's your preferred Go-To in the following situations—*Family* or *Friends*?

Select the checkboxes for situations where you will go to your friends.

- You require to spread word that you need a new job.
- Your spouse needs a lift to the airport early morning. You are out of town.
- You had a bad day at work and need timeout.
- A friend needs a loan for 6 months, but you are unable to help.
- There is a movie you want to watch at the theatre on a weekend.

If you checked at least 3 boxes, then **Friends** are your **GoTo!**



Friends are the most under-rated and unsung heroes or heroines in our lives. They are next to us, behind us, and forever, hanging around us even if all are dispersed geographically.

How is that possible?

Well, friends dwell in our souls...so, can they ever be apart?

Think hard.

There's bound to be at least one person in your life who's always returned to you no matter how hard you fought or how long you sulked and stayed silent.

That is the tenacity of a friendship.

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**Friends can say anything!**

**F**riends are the only people who can **candidly say** "*You are stupid!*" and **get away** with it!

Play this excerpt from the famous American television series "**Friends.**"

Direct link: [The Underrated Ones](#)

## **What Else Are Friends Capable of Doing?**



Helping each other at work

2 of 7



Exploring and learning new things

3 of 7



Giving wordless company during those emotional movies!

4 of 7

5 of 7



Helping set up business.

6 of 7



Growing old together.

7 of 7

**Is Friendship Only About Good Things?**



Not really. There are distractions that friends can cause, abet, or lead to such as:

- Peer pressure to network for greater social acceptance and appreciation.
- Emotional blackmail to extract unjust favors
- Influence choices and decisions regardless of relevance and significance
- Pour misplaced sympathy and support, thereby validating incorrect actions

Then, how can friends outweigh all the other options such as exercise, yoga, talk-therapies, etc., for mental wellbeing?

Here are some real stories that prove friends are invaluable.



**That's What Friends Are for!**



## Story 1

### Tale of a Missing Dictionary



#### ***1983: The missing dictionary***

"If any of you don't bring your pocket dictionary to class tomorrow, expect a zero in your test! Is that clear to all?"

I trembled in fear as I remembered my English teacher's dire threat from the previous day. I had completely forgotten about the dictionary till I entered the school. In class ten, getting a zero out of ten in a class test was a huge crisis. Many a friendship broke over a mark scored more or less.

"You can take mine." I looked at Mili, the brat of the class, as she held out her dictionary.

I was puzzled. "Why would I do that?"

Mili shrugged her shoulders and said "Well, I disobeying teachers is a common thing...am used to getting scolded and losing grades. You are a good girl. You shouldn't lose grades just

for a stupid reason."

***2024: A chance meeting at a coffee shop***

"It's so nice to see you, teacher. Do you remember me and my batchmates?"

Smiling affectionately, the now 80+ year old teacher hugged me and nodded. "Of course! I remember most of you. How's Mili?" Seeing my surprised look, she laughed and said "I knew she had given her dictionary to you that day. When you handed it to me during class inspection, I recognized it from the tiny "M" scribbled in red ink on the back cover. I had scolded her for doing that in an earlier class. Yet, I gave her a zero because I had to fulfil my condition. But, I prayed to God that night for blessing that kind-hearted girl with a good life for being such a good friend."

## Story 2

### A Timely Reminder



"How are you? I heard you left your job. Why? No...don't say that you had to run the household single-handedly."

I began laughing at the volley of indignant questions from my dear classmate during a reunion after almost 10-15 years. A bit defensively, I retorted "Sometimes, things aren't as simple. There had been no other option back then but to quit."

"What about now? Why don't you restart your work life? Your parents didn't spend on your education to just run a household."

"Who will give job to a forty-year old housewife? I have been out of professional life for so many years. The only thing I could do to earn now was to take up baby-sitting or elder-care assignments going by my recent past experiences. I don't really want to do that."

"Are you still drawing?"

"Yes. That's something that keeps me going on."

"Well. It's fixed then. I will send my children to you for drawing classes. **AND** I will pay fees for those classes. But, you will increase the number of students as the weeks pass. Is that a promise?"

I was indignant. "Why will I take money for teaching my friends' kids?"

"Because, you've forgotten what it means to have your own earnings. I need to remind you. That's the only way you will push yourself to restart your work-life and earn more."

## Forever Friendships



There are zillion such stories about friendships. Do you want to share yours? Please write to us at [soulcafe2024@gmail.com](mailto:soulcafe2024@gmail.com)

Before we close, here's a personal favorite song dedicated to you all, sung by Dionne Warwick

and featuring Elton John, Gladys Knight, and Stevie Wonder .

Direct Link: [Dionne Warwick - That's What Friends Are For](#)



Soul Cafe

We hope you enjoyed this presentation. We would love to have your feedback and hear from you about

your friendship stories.

Please write to us at [soulcafe2024@gmail.com](mailto:soulcafe2024@gmail.com)