

(Style on a Dime) Proverbs 17:17: A friend loves at all times

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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Lately I have noticed that my younger daughter, Arianna, is changing. At nine-years-old, I find her growing taller than she was a few months ago, wanting to express her unique style and newfound tastes in everything from clothing to room décor. Most importantly she has been on a quest to find that perfect best friend. Although she has friends, she is still looking for the one upon whom she can bestow the title of bff, best friend forever. She has been trying a few on for size and learning a lot in the process.

Her dad and I are teaching her that the friends she chooses today can play an important role in determining her future path in life. At an early age, we want our daughter to understand that relationships are one of the most important investments there are; without good ones, financial success seems meaningless and financial disaster seems hopeless. We are teaching Ari a few friendship guidelines as we train her to be a young lady of truth and integrity, grace, and style.

True friends take turns and share

Ari had been playing with Suzie, (not her real name) but Suzie only wanted to do what Suzie liked to do. Also, if Suzie didn't get her way, she refused to play at all. Whether you are a 10-year-old shopping for a friend or a 40-year-old, when you see those types of behavior in your would-be-bff, think twice before claiming her as the one.

Even if bad behavior by a friend isn't directed at you initially, your turn will come soon. Also, if your friend doesn't like to share with others, that is also a warning sign. She may not want to share you either. Hint: you should not have to ask Suzie for permission to hang out with your girl Sally. If so, Suzie has some real control issues and you should run!

True friends know how to listen (and keep a secret...mostly)

My older daughter, Alanna, was once telling me about a friend who was on her school bus. I asked her if this friend was a best friend. Her response revealed just how in tuned she was as a 12-year-old. She replied, "We laugh a lot together, but she usually does all the talking, and not much listening." A true friend is interested in what you have to say, and will not betray your confidence. Hint: If you do have a bff who occasionally spills the beans with no malicious intent, then be discerning about what you share with him. Mama always said that if you don't want anyone to know, keep your lips sealed!

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True friendship can never be separated by distance

True friends are difficult to find, therefore once you have identified a real friend, invest in the relationship by staying in touch, even if you (or they) move. This summer we visited some of our daughters' friends in Alabama and Georgia. I am hopeful that these relationships will continue into their adult lives. It's so beautiful to watch a new friendship forming; it's exciting, it's adventurous, it's safe, and it endures. With true friends, even if you have been apart for a while, you pick up where you last left off, just like the girls did this summer.

When our first child was born, I was really into Winnie the Pooh-I think it was because my favorite aunt called me Pooh Bear- so I bought her Pooh clothes, music, and books. In one particular storybook Pooh was pondering an important question, "Who is my best friend in the Hundred Acre Wood?"

After considering all of his good friends, he concluded that Piglet was his best friend, because Piglet always gave Pooh the biggest slice of pie (not to mention he was always kind and caring). Pooh decided that if Piglet was his best friend, he wanted to be Piglet's best friend as well, by offering Piglet the same type of love and caring concern. A true friend is worth more than any amount of money. There is a wonderful proverb in the Bible which states that a friend loves at all times... Proverbs 17:17 Can you be described as a true friend? Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at low costs. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.