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Writers Turn to the Internet for Support, Friendship and Advice

By Patricia Gatto

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Riding on the fumes of potential, you take pen to paper or keyboard to monitor. Endless hours of creativity intermingle with apprehension, but your need to write engulfs your spirit. You swim high on the waves of excitement and trudge forward through the waves of doubt. Finally, your manuscript is complete.

Looking back, the process becomes a blur, it's difficult to recall the point at which your first draft transformed into your final draft, but it happened. For a moment, you allow yourself to be still and bask in the glory of your completed manuscript. But only for a moment. Now a new process must begin.

As if going from concept to page isn't enough, the aspiring writer must now bravely pass his or her cherished manuscript along for opinion. Opinion is actually too light of a word; the writer must submit to, and endure the critique. For those faint at heart, the critique can be a frightening experience, rearing its ugly head of self-doubt to the highest position. But ultimately, it's what makes you stronger, better at your craft, and prepares you to for the next phase on your quest to publication.

Family and friends only hinder the critique process. Although supportive, their opinions are bias and counter productive unless they are professionals. So where do you turn if you are not fortunate enough to have a local writing group or personal mentor in your life? The modern writer turns to the cyber world.

As you make your way through search engines and dodge pop-ups ads in pursuit of an answer, message boards and writer's forums abound. Your ultimate goal, to find that band of brothers and sisters, bound together in their somewhat solitary pursuit of a writing career. A nameless group of competitors hooked together by modems, monitors, keyboards, nicknames, and electricity, generously willing to share advice. A group you can trust.

I have found such a writer's haven. A speakeasy filled with poets and prophets, editors, agents and journalists. A space where the published and unpublished exist together. By invitation only, I secretly found the backdoor into this cyber club. Over two hundred members and growing strong, this forum

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has everything from professional guest visitors to idle chatter. A place to receive feedback on your work, ask questions, share information, make contacts, friendships and share your successes and defeats.

Now that the secret code to this cyber club has been lifted, Backspace – The Writer's Place is open to the public. Why not click open the door and lurk for awhile? After you get to know the posters, reach out for some feedback on your work. Then you can move to the next phase with confidence. For after the dreaded critique process, you must endure another hurdle, the query letter. Why not tackle it with the help of your new cyber friends at Backspace? <http://www.bksp.org/index.shtm>

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Category: Writer's Resources, Internet

Word Count (including Resource Box): 575

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True Friends Are Not Dream-Slashers

By David Leonhardt

A friendship poem:

Choose friends wisely, the portrait they paint
Is who you are and who you ain't.
Friendship is life's great support
When friends are of the right sort.
For all your dreams do they make room,
Or bring you down with doom and gloom?
You will know a friendship is true

When it brings out the best in you..

It's true. You can tell a person by the company she keeps. Our friendships not only tell a lot about who we are -- they make us who we are.

The friendship poem above says it all. You will know a friendship is true when it brings out the best in you.

Take a look at your friendships. Do they bring out the best in you? That might seem like a silly question. We all tend to think, "Of course they bring out the best in me. I wouldn't be friends with them otherwise."

But stop and think why you are friends. Here are a few common reasons why people become friends:

Common background, sharing a comfort level in company from "the same side of the tracks".

Common current situation, being able to discuss parenting, home renovations, or some other major life circumstance. Common interest, such as cards, bowling, hunting, etc. For shy people, a person who actually approached you is a candidate for friendship. For leaders, somebody who seems content to follow is a likely candidate. Somebody you spend time with anyway, such as a colleague, sibling, etc, often becomes a friend. Somebody you see frequently anyway, such as a neighbor, store clerk, etc, could become a friend.

These are just a few reasons people choose friends. It is the easy, natural way, but it is not always in our best interest. Sure, we should always want to get along with colleagues, neighbors, siblings, and anybody else.

But we should choose our friends, the people we open up to, very carefully. For instance, even a sibling can bring you down, pooh-pooh your dreams and load you up with negativity. "Ha! You think you can teach? What do you know about teaching?"

Even well-meaning friends can be dream-slashers. "Oh, do you really think you should go into business for yourself? I mean, what about security?"

On the other hand, some friends have a way of building up your dreams. "Go for it! You could really do well. And at worst, you'll at least have given it your best shot!"

Friends will often lend a hand. "Gee, I don't know much about fitness, but is there any way I can help you reach your goal?" Dream-slashers usually don't. "Hey, if you insist on pursuing this crazy scheme, leave me out of it."

A true friendship should: Encourage you to live your dream. Support you toward your goals. Sympathize for your losses and help you find a silver lining. Build your self-esteem.

If happiness and life-satisfaction are your goals, your friends should be chosen on the basis of how

well they can accomplish those four goals.

Happiness is a personal choice that comes from within. But it sure doesn't hurt to have supportive friendships that help us achieve our goals.

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Poem—Friendship, Love and Fear

A Recipe For Friendship

FRIENDSHIP Suggestions For Feeling Better.

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My Online Friends – Dating Website Script

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