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MEMENTO

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Message from the Founder

Dear Scribblorists,

I got a few minutes of window time today, so I decided to write teaching notes. I teach five different age groups every week, and I find myself having to do quick mental shifts to remind myself of how to effectively approach them.

What I noted here are facts and my observations about these age groups that we often miss. These insights are likely helpful not only for businessmen, parents, teachers, mentors, and other family members—but also for anyone struggling to understand others, especially when trying to feel “loved” and have a sense of “belongingness.” The age groups are arranged according to Erik Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory of Development.

Aged 3-5 – Preschoolers

They love playing. Joy motivates them. They are very young but their thoughts matter. Hear them. Ask them why they don’t want to do something (that’s good for them) or why they keep on doing something (that’s bad for them). Take time to explain things; they need to understand why they should and should not do things—and not just be told what to do. **What they need: Fun.** Your listening ears.

Aged 5-12 – School agers

They are competitive. They are also idealistic. That means they learn better when they’re competing with children their age. They badly want to win, and they are afraid to lose. So they need you to be at your best (and to make them proud), but they also need to feel that it’s safe to make mistakes with you. **What they need:** Thrill/challenge. A space where they feel safe to fail while learning.

Aged 12-18 – Teenagers

They need autonomy and guidance at the same time. Make sure to balance the two. Since they're building their self-identity, avoid making them feel too bad about themselves. Make every compliment count. And when they make mistakes, give them hints. Allow them to realize that they're wrong until they admit it themselves. **What they need:** Your trust in them. Your belief that they can do it.

Aged 18-40 – Young Adults

Relationships matter the most. They prefer to be in the company of people who share the same interests, values, and dreams with them. To attract them into your circle, familiarity is an advantage. But they are also in constant search for significance. Fail to make them feel acknowledged, and they'll think twice about trusting you. **What they need:** Make them feel valued. Make them feel that they belong.

Aged 40-65 – Middle Adults

They'll trust you if you show quality. They won't try their luck on you until you prove yourself worthy of their effort, money, and time. They deeply appreciate your help, and they know it when you're 'sincerely' helping them. Once you earn their respect, you also get their loyalty. **What they need:** Your excellence. Your care.

And when you're not sure of what to do, put yourself in their shoes. Although the points I mentioned above are generally true for the five age groups, it's still best to keep in mind that each person is unique. Above all, love is the key. Where there is love, there is always a way—not just to make friends, but to build friendships that last a lifetime.

Make friends and cherish them,
Elaine

Scribblory at the Aklat Sining: A Pinoy Books and Art Expo

Last June 2025, Scribblory was invited to join **Aklat Sining: A Pinoy Books and Art Expo!**

Throughout that Sunday, the 29th, the skies were heavy with dark clouds that burst occasionally, but every exhibitor at Eastwood Central Plaza, Eastwood City, in Quezon City stayed dry and well-shaded under their own roofs. The venue was set up like a small village, with house-like booths painted in vibrant colors and doors and windows wide open to welcome passersby. Scribblory's booth was near the stage.



At the event, Scribblory had the opportunity to showcase a diverse collection of titles from its *bookshop*, ranging from memoirs and self-help to fiction. They also relaunched *Springboard to Heaven: The Jojo Sayson Adventure*, a title originally published in 2012, co-authored by four-time New York Times bestselling writer James Riordan and Dr. Jojo Sayson, the inspiring founder of The Project Michelangelo Foundation (PMF). In support of Dr. Sayson's advocacy to help children with Progeria in the Philippines, Scribblory pledged to donate all proceeds from the book to PMF.



Despite the gloomy weather, some of the authors/Scribblorists, such as Vergie Manligas, author of *A Silver Lining* and *Amiable Hometown*; L. L. Tumbaga, author of *Redeemed*; and writing mentee, Grace Dizon managed to visit the booth and availed a couple of the displayed titles. One of the PMF angels/volunteers also dropped by wearing purple (the foundation's brand color) to get a copy of the founder's book.



We thank *Pinoy Indie Authors* for giving us the opportunity to participate in such an artistic event, along with our fellow creatives and Filipino entrepreneurs! We look forward to joining more book exhibitions in the future!

(This article was also published in Scribblory News.)

Timeless Bonds:

How Friendship
Evolves a Lifetime

FROM LAUGHTER LINES TO LIFELINES: A STORY OF EVOLVING FRIENDSHIP

by Regel Jean J. Achacoso

Friendship begins in the simplest ways. Sometimes, it starts over shared crayons and playground swings. At other times, it begins in the quiet of a classroom—two strangers seated side by side, connected by a laugh or a knowing glance. We don't always realize it at the time, but these moments are the roots of something deep—something timeless.

I remember my first best friend, Mia. We met in the third grade, arguing over who got to use the blue marker. That silly fight turned into a conversation, then into a daily routine of sitting together, walking home side by side, and sharing secrets like they were precious treasure. Our friendship was loud, messy, and full of adventure. We thought we would stay like that forever.

But life, as it does, began to change. High school brought new people, new interests, and new schedules. We didn't talk every day. There were times when months passed without a message. But when we did talk, it was as if no time had passed at all. That's the thing about true friendship—it bends, but it doesn't break; it evolves.

We learned that friendship in adulthood looks different. It means understanding that people grow in different directions but remain rooted in shared memories.

It means celebrating each other's milestones even from afar—her graduation, my first job, her wedding, and my quiet breakdowns. There were times she was my lifeline, reminding me of who I was when I forgot, and I like to think I was the same for her.

Our friendship shifted from sleepovers and silly dares to long phone calls during lunch breaks, and from borrowing clothes to sending baby shower gifts. As we entered our thirties, our bond deepened—not because we had more time, but because we made time. Our connection was no longer built just on shared interests but on shared understanding, forgiveness, and patience.

Now, when I look at old photos, I see how our laughter lines grew into lifelines. We are no longer the kids who swore on pinky promises. We are women who have seen each other through heartbreak, illness, distance, and growth. And yet, we still laugh until we cry over inside jokes that no one else understands. We still check in when the world feels heavy.

Timeless friendship isn't loud. It's not about daily messages or perfect attendance. It's about showing up when it matters. It's about evolving together without needing to say, "I've changed." True friends see the change and stay anyway.

So yes, friendship begins with blue markers and giggles, but it survives through seasons of silence, storms of misunderstanding, and the slow dance of growing older. And if you're lucky, like I am, you'll have someone who walks with you from childhood's sunshine to adulthood's dusk.

Because some bonds aren't measured in years—they're measured in how many versions of yourself a friend has loved and never left.

From Crayon Days to Silver Grays

We scribbled dreams on paper skies,
With scraped-up knees and firefly eyes.
Shared secret codes and cookie crumbs,
Laughed through mess and chewing gums—
Back when "forever" had no size.

Teenage storms then rocked our sails,
With heartbreak notes and midnight tales.
We drifted far, but not apart—
You still knew every beat of the heart.
We danced through wins and silent fails.

In college halls and office haze,
We learned the cost of grown-up days.
But birthdays missed were not the end—
You showed me how time bends for friends.
Our roots held firm through life's wild maze.

Now gray hairs peek, but you're still you,
The one who knew my truest view.
You finish thoughts I never say,
Still here in your own quirky way—
A friendship worn, but never through.

And when the dusk replaces dawn,
Our stories will keep living on.
In laugh lines carved and wrinkled grace,
In memory's warm, tender place—
Where crayon days and silver grays belong.

THE FRIEND WHO NEVER LEAVES

by Julie Rose P. Mendoza

A true friend is not someone who is always there, but someone who never leaves."

In the fast-paced rhythm of life, true friendship remains one of the few things that doesn't fade or grow old. Time may pass, distance may widen, and communication may weaken—but a bond built on trust, sacrifice, and genuine care stays strong. This is what we call a timeless bond, a kind of relationship that goes beyond physical presence and lives in the heart and memory.

True friendship doesn't always begin with grand moments. Sometimes, it grows silently in a simple act of listening, in an unexpected hug, or in quietly sitting beside a weary, tearful friend. In those quiet moments, a relationship filled with understanding slowly takes shape. Every act of comfort given without expecting anything in return makes the connection stronger. And as the years go by, this bond becomes even more solid, even without daily conversations or frequent meetings.

This kind of friendship doesn't require expensive gifts. Its value isn't measured by material things received, but by the sincerity of presence, especially in times of need. Some friends stay silent by your side, but when you are lost or broken, they become your guide. Though not perfect, their hearts are always ready to accept and understand. Their goodness is not written or announced; they simply live it because it's a part of who they are.

As friendship deepens, we learn to share not only joy but also the weight of our emotions. And it is in these moments that we discover who truly stays. A real friend is not only there when everything is going well; they are also there when you no longer recognize yourself. In their presence, we learn to accept and embrace our own weaknesses.

Friendship is a home built on acceptance, not on perfect understanding. There are disagreements, silences, and misunderstandings, but respect and trust never disappear. In every chapter of our lives, a true friend is not just someone who walks beside us; they are our strength when we feel weak.

As we grow older, the value of such a connection becomes clearer. It's no longer about how often you talk, but how deeply you remain true to one another. In a world filled with pretense, friendship is a rare gift.

This timeless bond is not formed overnight. It is the product of years of acceptance, presence, and understanding given freely, without expecting anything in return. It serves as a reminder that amid constant change, there are people who are real, who remain, and who quietly prove their love not through words but through steadfastness. And those people are the true treasures of our lives.

TRUE FRIENDS FOR LIFE

by Vince Pablico

“The friends you make in college are friends you’ll have for life, even if you don’t talk for years at a time.” – Jessica Park

It was December 2, 2018, Sunday, when I traveled to General Trias, Cavite, to reunite with some of my college besties. Almost a year had passed since I last saw them in person—life and distance had kept us apart, especially now that I live in Laguna. Yes, I’m in a long-distance friendship, and yet, the bond remains strong.

Back in college, we called our circle “*Tropang Exotic*.” (“*Tropa*” is Filipino slang for a close-knit group of friends.) The name was coined by our friend Iyah. She said we were all unique in our own ways—different personalities, different dreams, different attitudes—yet somehow, we clicked. We made it work. Our group was a colorful blend of introverts, extroverts, and ambiverts. I think there were more than 15 of us in total, though not everyone could make it that day. We missed those who couldn’t come.

We all graduated in April 2012 from the same university in Cavite, each with a degree in Business Administration. And though time has moved on and life has taken us in different directions, that day reminded me that our friendship still stands—intact, real, and alive.

We met at a milk tea shop near our alma mater. We caught up over snacks, laughter, and endless stories of work, dreams, and everyday life.

And of course, there was unlimited picture-taking—because memories like these deserve to be captured.

Before heading home, I caught sight of the sidewalk that led to our old campus. On impulse, I asked, “*Tara, daan tayo sa school.*” And just like that, we went. We took photos and walked familiar paths that felt like yesterday. Nostalgia wrapped itself around us. We missed those carefree college days. But more than anything, I simply enjoyed that one good day. My heart was full. I was full of gratitude—S.O.B.R.A. grateful, in fact. S.O.B.R.A. stands for the five things I’m grateful for that day:

1. SHARE

I gave small gifts to the friends who had once given me so much during college. To the girls—Cathy, Joyce, Eunice, Diana, and Iyah—I handed out pre-loved books. To Arnold, a fine liner pen for his art. These may have been used items, but they came with care and intention. I just wanted to give something, to remind them to keep going. They were the ones who stood by me back then—and I’ll never forget that.

2. OPEN UP

Once upon a time, I was the quietest in the group—introverted, shy, and unsure. But that day, I was open. I talked. I listened. I laughed with them. And I felt heard. Even after all these years, I was still part of the group. Still welcome. Still seen.

3. BE

“Do less. Be more.” That was the title of the book I shared with Joyce, and that’s exactly how I felt. I didn’t need to impress or perform. I just needed to be. To be a friend. To be present. And I realized I am a good friend—not because I try hard, but because I am surrounded by good ones.

4. RELATE

I reconnected with them deeply. That day reminded me that relationships—real, heartfelt connections—matter far more than money or material success. Love matters. More love. I was happy because I had the chance to love my friends again in person.

5. ASPIRE

We dreamed together. We talked about starting businesses, buying cars, and traveling the world. They're dreamers too, and I love that about them. It reminded me that it’s okay to dream big—as long as we take it one step at a time.

True friends stay forever.

Let me share a few lines from a poem I once wrote for them:

From my heart is a million thanks to all my friends
For the tears and the laughter that never ends,
For the time they picked me up when I was down,
For teaching me to smile again every time I frown.

God is so good for giving me friends who care,
Always conferring me love like fires that flare.
True friends may be hard to find, like a gem.
I am thankful that in my life, I have all of them!

True friendship doesn’t always need constant contact. It just needs a true heart. And that day reminded me: I may live far, and life may change, but some bonds—like *Tropang Exotic*—are simply timeless.

A LIFE ENRICHED BY FRIENDSHIP

by Plumarupok

In a world filled with clutter and chaos, I realize that friendships have been a vital part of my journey. From my young age to my days as an employee, I met colleagues who became close friends, and even after I resigned and started a new job in a different place, our bond remained strong. We would catch up regularly, sharing stories about our lives and offering support whenever needed.

My involvement with The Fraternal Order of Eagles Philippine Eagles introduced me to like-minded individuals from various clubs. And through Facebook, we connected, built trust, and developed a camaraderie that transcended geographical boundaries. We'd exchange jokes in the comment sections of posts or through direct messages, creating a sense of belonging.

As a content creator, I've had the privilege of meeting friends from all over the world through social media. Our continuous engagement fostered trust and good relationships, and I've been amazed by the support and encouragement I've received. Some friends even offered valuable advice and moral support during challenging times, which I deeply appreciate.

My experiences as a writer and poet have also led to meaningful connections. Through my publisher and co-authors, I've built relationships with fellow writers who share similar passions. We're not just colleagues; we've become like family, supporting and motivating each other.

One of my unforgettable moments with Scribblogy was when I joined my first Christmas party with them. Unexpectedly, traffic and some accidents happened on that day, and the chaos for an amateur writer like me. I need to be transferred to another taxi, as the old man driver didn't have a GCash, a payment method I preferred as a commuter. Without hesitation, I messaged Admin Nini about my situation and asked her to lend me some cash to pay for my fare when I got there. Admin Nini and Admin Elaine solved my problem—then the party started.

One of my dreams is to meet my loyal followers in person, like Chuchilyn, Arlene, Jenny Joy, Rica Mae, Jonnavel, Stella, Irene, Wyna Winn, and many others, to take selfies, and have group photos. I envision us bonding over shared interests and creating unforgettable memories. This dream motivates me every day, and I'm excited to see it become a reality.

As I look forward to publishing my solo novel, I'm grateful for the friendships I've formed along the way. These relationships have enriched my life. I'm thankful for the love, support, and encouragement they've brought me. With God's grace, I hope to continue nurturing these bonds and creating new ones, filling my life with purpose and joy. A friendship chronicles: Stories of love, support, and adventure.

THE GIFT OF BEING THERE

by R.A. Laturbo

People often say that real friendship is hard to find—especially the kind that lasts a lifetime. Some believe that you have to spend many years together to become close friends, but I’ve learned that time alone doesn’t make a friendship strong or lasting. What really matters is trust, care, and understanding.

Sometimes, someone enters your life when you least expect it and completely changes how you see friendship. That’s what happened to me recently. I became friends with someone who is 20 years younger than me. At first, I was unsure. I thought the age gap would make it hard for us to connect. We were in very different stages of life, but to my surprise, our connection came naturally. We didn’t focus on our differences; instead, we learned from each other, and that helped our friendship grow.

We had only known each other for a few months, but something happened that made our bond much stronger. We were in the same training wave for a new job, and he was saving up to buy a motorcycle. To save money, he would often stay in the company’s sleeping quarters after his shift, even if it meant sleepless nights. But then, something terrible happened—while he was sleeping, someone stole all the money he had worked so hard to save. He was heartbroken. I could see that he was deeply hurt, worried, and starting to lose his motivation. Even though he didn’t say much, I could feel the heavy burden he was carrying.

I knew I had to do something. So, I reached out and let him know I was there for him. I listened without judging and simply gave him my time. I supported him because I cared. I didn’t expect anything in return, but something special happened—he opened up to me. He started talking about his pain and slowly began to trust me. He even started calling me “*Kuya*,” a Filipino word that means “older brother.” That simple word meant so much to me. It showed that he respected and trusted me like a family member.

Something even more surprising happened, too. I got to meet his father, and we connected right away. I never expected to make a friend in his dad, but we got along well. Now, I consider him part of my growing circle of friends. It’s amazing how friendship can form in unexpected ways and places.

That experience helped me understand something very important: friendship isn’t about how long you’ve known someone; it’s about who is there for you when life gets tough. True friends are the ones who stay during the hard times, not just the happy ones.

This friendship taught me that even new connections can become deep and meaningful. A strong friendship can grow in just a short time if it’s built on *honesty, care, and kindness*.

And over time, these bonds can become even stronger. We might be from different generations, but we continue to learn from each other. That's how our friendship keeps growing.

Friendship changes as people grow. It becomes stronger through shared struggles and honest conversations. What starts as a helping hand can turn into a lifelong source of strength.

So yes, timeless friendship isn't about counting the years; it's about the moments you share, the care you give, and the way you show up when someone needs you. These are the bonds that grow and last a lifetime.

WHEN THE WORLD SHIFTS: THE FRIEND WHO REMAINS

by Erwinfe Suzima A. Donato

Friendship is a quiet, enduring miracle—an invisible thread that ties souls across time, distance, and change.

Unlike the ties of blood or the flames of romantic love, friendship is forged not by necessity, but by resonance. It begins as a flicker—an unspoken understanding, a shared glance, a kindred laugh—and, when nurtured, evolves into one of the most sacred and transformative relationships we are privileged to know. It is friendship that walks with us, not only in celebration, but in silence, sorrow, and change. It is the bond that matures as we do, reflecting our growth, bearing witness to our becoming, and anchoring us when the world shifts beneath our feet.

In childhood, friendship is innocence incarnate. It is laughter on playgrounds, hands clasped tightly in trust, and secrets whispered under bedsheets.

At this age, we love without fear and connect without caution.

Our friends are our whole world—co-adventurers in the purest sense. These bonds are fragile in duration, yet monumental in impact. They teach us the first language of loyalty and belonging, long before we can articulate such things. They give us a taste of what it means to be seen, chosen, and held by someone outside of family.

As we step into adolescence—a time marked by internal storms and aching self-discovery—friendship becomes our lifeline. Amidst the chaos of identity, insecurity, and yearning, friends become our mirrors and protectors. They reflect back the parts of ourselves we are only beginning to understand. These friendships burn brightly, often with intensity and imperfection. *(cont. to next page)*

We stumble through mistakes, but in doing so, we learn what it means to hold space for another—to forgive, to endure, and to grow alongside someone in real time.

Adulthood ushers in a more complex season. Responsibilities multiply, priorities shift, and time becomes a precious currency. Friends scatter, not from betrayal, but from life's natural drift—careers, families, geography. In this season, we learn that true friendship does not demand constancy, but constancy of heart. A soul-friend, even if distant, remains close. When you speak again after months or years, it is as though no time has passed. These bonds are no longer rooted in convenience, but in deep, intentional connection—built not merely on shared experiences, but on shared truths. With age, we come to understand that presence is more powerful than proximity, and that the richest friendships are those that evolve without expectation.

In the later chapters of life, friendship acquires an almost sacred resonance. As the noise of the world fades, and we are left with the essence of what matters, the presence of a true friend becomes a kind of grace.

They are the custodians of our stories, the ones who have walked beside us through joy and ruin. These friendships are not loud—they are woven from quiet endurance, weathered storms, and mutual reverence.

There is a profound beauty in sitting beside someone who remembers all the versions of you, and still chooses you—every time.

Even in the twilight of life, the heart does not forget how to connect. New friendships may emerge, gently, between those who have learned the value of presence over performance, sincerity over spectacle. In these final seasons, friendship is distilled to its purest form: two souls witnessing each other with tenderness, humor, and gratitude.

Friendship, in its truest form, is not static. It expands and contracts, retreats and returns, transforms and transcends. It is not defined by how often we speak, but by how deeply we are understood. It is not measured in years, but in the quiet moments where two hearts meet in truth.

A timeless friendship is a mirror to the soul and a sanctuary for the spirit. It does not wither with time—it ripens. It does not fade with age—it deepens. And when all else falls away, it remains—silent, steadfast, and eternal.

FOR FUN AND FOR LIFE

by Rio S. Manlangit

As a leap year baby born in 1984, I met my first friends around the early 1990s. It was a time in the Philippines when evening blackouts occurred almost every day. While we waited for the electricity to be restored, the people in our neighborhood gathered outside our houses. The kids my age and I played *patintero* and hide-and-seek. Our older siblings played guitar and jammed to acoustic music all night long. I remember seeing fireflies prancing around a small Calamansi tree, like twinkling lights in the pitch dark. It was a vivid and beautiful memory.

My school bus usually arrived at the break of dawn. Yes, around five o'clock in the morning. Since I lived at the farthest pick-up point, I was always the first to be fetched. That was when I met more friends. I was always excited to see them hop in the bus, one by one. After class, we were fetched in batches. My friends and I volunteered to be in the last batch most of the time, so that we still have more time to play in the playground.

As we grew up, some of them moved houses while some transferred to another school. Indeed, friends come and go, and those who stayed are the ones who continued to walk this life with me. We were a group of five girls who ranked average in academics and were obedient to the school policies. We were individually boring, but together, we laughed full-bellied laughs—the kind that left us gasping for breath and wiping tears from our eyes.

Adolescence is usually when we first experience a wave of complicated emotions—awkward in some ways, yet exciting in others. A group of adolescents is one that agrees and disagrees with each other simultaneously, but in spite of different family backgrounds and upbringings, stay tight and solid.

We enjoyed movie marathons after school in either of our houses. That was the era of the movies on rented DVDs: *Titanic*, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, and *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. High school will always be the best time of our lives.

After finishing high school, the five of us went our separate ways—each to a different college or university. Still, we'd meet at SM Mall in Manila now and then, usually during lunch breaks or when our dismissal times happened to align.

We ended up graduating from college at different school years. Each of us met a few other friends. We got jobs, got married, and started families. Still, we manage to get together once in a while. What used to be talks about movies, books, and a good place to eat, now becomes sharing of thoughts about how we balance the time between career and motherhood, how to bring up Gen Alpha kids, and what's the best liniment for back pain.

Thinking back on these friendships makes me feel nostalgic. My heart is always filled with gratitude. I am glad that they became a part of my story.

THE LUNCH TABLE DILEMMA

by Geraldson Jambuyat

It's lunch break. There's *sonder* in this scene. You roam around clustered tables with laughter and a fair amount of bickering bouncing between students with their own kinds of people. It's loud. But if there's anything louder than the clamoring voices, it's your dilemma. Now, *where do you sit?*

In an instance like this, most of us will likely compromise by conjuring the magic phone. The inner corner of the most unseen table is the radical solution, right? Perfect. You pull out your phone, you pretend to look at something, you doomscroll on Facebook reels, and you completely ignore that there's a whole world out there. Maybe while you do this, you sneak in a spoonful of food into your mouth. At least you're eating.

This summer vacation, I decided to do the most. While this might be classified as productive, some would argue that this is a foolish way to spend an opportunity to go out of town. The thing is, I read an entire textbook-esque introduction to Psychology! Not enough, I enrolled in an online course on the same topic. There's pressure, of course. Nevertheless, it's a confidence booster. Otherwise, I wouldn't find the courage to bring it up.

I read there, so fascinatingly odd, that attachments are naturally built as a survival impulse. *We are wired to be social beings.* This is ironic, though, as aside from the fact that these are often an object of destruction, we have this expectation that it should come naturally.

Yet, well, you sit at the edge of a table meant for six. And my apologies, but the silence between you and the world is not a glitch in the matrix. Welcome, freshmen! This is the desperate wish to be seen and the paralytic fear of standing out.

There's a girl across the room laughing with such ease. Has she ever tried to speak and felt tightening in her throat? And there you hope, and hope, and hope...*blah, blah, blah*...that a blessing in disguise will sit across your table and befriend you. And, well, you mind-read.

We just can't seem to get tired of acting psychic, can't we? Perhaps, I should impose that we're born with an extraordinary ability—to doubt ourselves in debilitating ways. We read into silences. We misread glances. We convince ourselves we've already been rejected before even saying hello. So, we stay where it's safe.

I have a friend, dearest in many ways. I have friends. I think most of us have one, but we all started somewhat this way. So, think of this as a rewind. He's very good at *kalokohan*. But just recently, as I was writing this article, he wound up in a state familiar to me, particularly. You know when the atmosphere seems to shift abruptly when someone, previously in gaiety, goes silent? But this time, in texts.

We talked about college. The excitement that comes with it. The ups and the downs, say. We're not from the place where the university resides. So, a boarding house seems fitting. We will be living together with many from our previous school. From this thought alone, thinking about the expenses this may demand makes me wonder about the near future. You stand among the crowd, with your lunch break you barely could afford. Walking miles instead of grabbing a fare because putting food on the table weighs it down. No thoughts of dehydration.

Going back, he told me he was scared. Scared of the unexpected, of all the new things that entail college; of living away; of living away from his mother. Scared of what may happen to his mom. It has been them, together, for a long time, after all. And if I may be honest, so am I.

What happens now? This is the type of question that plagues me. The type to make me write an essay about fearing college. It drums into the heart. It sinks your stomach a month prior to entering this "real world" (whatever that means).

But to share it with others, the weight of worry? It's a lift in the middle of nowhere when you can no longer feel your feet, even a hundred needles being plucked from your skin among thousands of other needles. It gives you confidence and a sense of belonging and makes you realize that whatever you're feeling is more common than anyone lets on.

Everyone's trying to belong. Everyone's hoping someone to take the first move. And yes, some are better at hiding it. But many of us are just like any of us. And what I would insist a truth is that, by incessantly ignoring the world and just waiting for the fruit to fall off the tree, you're possibly just waiting for it to rot with age. A gardener must let a plant flourish at its own pace, but it will not prune itself.

To quote a friend, *verbatim*:

"Siguro, as the time goes by, makakayanan naman natin. Siguro, unti-unti, hindi naman natin kailangang mag-rush. Kailangan nating mag-adjust. Na... damdamin ang bawat isa; yung environment, yung mga taong makakasalamuha mo, at...yung sarili mo. Yung makikita mo na pumapasok ka sa bagong landas, nag-ttry out ng new things, at hinahayaan mo ang sarili na matuto...at tumuklas."

UNPLANNED PATHS, UNBREAKABLE BONDS

by Owen C. Manuel

Moving up from junior high school was not just a milestone—it was one of the happiest and most unforgettable days of my life. It marked more than an academic achievement; it was the beginning of a new chapter, a chance to reinvent myself in a new environment with new people and, most importantly, the opportunity to build new friendships. Who would have thought that behind the excitement of that day, I would also be facing so many changes that would shape the person I am becoming?

After junior high, anxiety clouded my thoughts. I couldn't help but wonder—what if I don't find friends? What if I don't fit in? I had always imagined myself taking the Home Economics strand in senior high, because that was where I felt most comfortable. On enrollment day, I prayed silently, hoping there would still be a slot for me in that strand. But to my disappointment, there were no more available spaces. I felt discouraged and unsure of what to do next. I was lost.

When asked to choose another strand, I hesitantly said, "Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS)." Deep down, I was terrified. I was never comfortable with public speaking, and I doubted whether I had the courage or confidence to thrive in a strand that demanded so much communication, expression, and interaction.

I didn't know if I would fit in or if I was making the right choice. But I chose HUMSS anyway, not knowing that this decision would eventually become one of the best I've ever made.

On the first day of school, I was nervous and quiet. But as the days passed, life surprised me in the most beautiful ways. I started to meet people—classmates who would eventually become more than just seatmates. They became my second family, my support system. These were the people who saw something in me that I didn't even see in myself. They were the ones who encouraged me to speak up, to believe in my own voice, and to discover hidden strengths I didn't know I had.

From Grade 11 to Grade 12, we grew not just as students, but as individuals. Together, we shared laughter, late-night project deadlines, personal struggles, and countless memories. We cried, we celebrated, and we supported each other like real friends do. We didn't just grow academically—we grew emotionally and socially. We built bonds that I know will last even as we go our separate ways.

Looking back, I realized that I didn't need to have everything go according to plan to succeed. (*cont. to next page*)

I may not have gotten the strand I originally wanted, but I gained something more valuable—growth, self-confidence, and friendships that feel like home. Life may not always give us what we expect, but sometimes, it gives us exactly what we need.

Now, as I prepare for college, I carry these lessons with me. I am no longer the same person who doubted himself so much. I'm still growing, but now I know that fear can be the starting point of courage. Sometimes, all it takes is saying "yes" to something unfamiliar, and you'll find yourself on the most beautiful journey of all.

THE ORANGES WE SHARE

by Charly Lam

I remember (and will always remember!) the day I met my other half as clearly as if it happened just the day before. This fateful meeting occurred on August 14, 2018, which was the first day we started Grade Seven. As I recall, we were tasked with writing an Essential Agreement paper that our class would uphold (we never followed it), and we were passing the marker we were using between one another.

I had the marker at one point and turned to hand it over to Sophia, who was a new student that year. I didn't say anything during this short exchange, so I don't know how or why I got to this point in my head. But I just suddenly remember having a gigantic metaphorical thought bubble appear in my mind, saying, *I think we'll be really good friends*. Honestly, I think this memory still remains strongly in my brain simply due to the fact that I have never gotten this gut feeling with anyone else.

Anyway, all of that aside, I did not whatsoever foresee just how big of a positive impact this girl would thus be making on my life.

As I reflect on all my memories with Sophia over these past (nearly) seven years, it really makes me wonder just how different my life would've been if I never actively chose to get closer to her all that time ago. Because now, I genuinely cannot imagine her not being in my life. She is my best friend, my sister, and my soulmate all in one, and I wouldn't trade her for the world. In a way, this is somewhat of my love letter to her.

We've really seen each other grow up over the years, and I'd like to say we bring out the best in each other. People like Sophia are genuinely one in a million because I have yet to find (if there even possibly would be) anyone like her! We almost always understand each other when we're struggling with something or one of us is really stressed.

I can't find the proper words to use at the moment but having this type of established rapport with someone just makes me feel so very seen, in a way—like we've shared similar experiences, meaning we can be there to support each other no matter what.

Additionally, I really appreciate the little things, like, for example, I recall this one time we were in a group hangout and walking outside, but it was really humid, and I ended up disassociating because the heat was affecting me. Apparently, she immediately assessed my facial expression and suggested we all go inside to cool down. I don't know why this specific moment has cropped up in my head, but genuinely, it's just tiny details that are noticed by her that make me grateful that there's someone who's actively learnt enough about me to sense these things.

Sure, we may fight sometimes and may not always get each other completely at times, but I think through every argument we had, we still manage to come back even stronger friendship-wise.

Sophia, please always remember that even though we now live on opposite ends of the Earth, nothing will ever change between the two of us—I love you so much and will always be here to lend an ear, whether that be virtually or in-person. Thank you for helping me grow in ways I never thought I could, and above all, thank you for just existing. Words cannot describe just how much I appreciate you, but I'll settle for this: knowing you really solidifies the fact that family isn't dictated just by blood for me.

SIDELINES

by Ma. Arielle Somera

I often think about the concept of stepping into the center to feel seen, like an actor in a play where many people die to clap. Then I ask myself: Would that really make me happy? Relieved? Seen? It is something I still don't fully know—something I keep returning to whenever I think too much about what could comfort me.

For a long time, I stood at the edges of things. I watched the world move around me, beautiful and distant. I know I was not exactly lonely; I was just outside of it all. But I kept on reminding myself a little more that, still, I exist. And while I exist, there are more things ahead of me—a reason to simply live.

As a child, I wasn't quite sociable. I often hid when we had visitors. I didn't talk at gatherings; I preferred to simply sit still. I was often considered a shy little girl who wanted to be alone. It was hard for me to make friends. And late at night, I would think, maybe it's because I wouldn't let them enter the circle I had drawn around myself, or maybe I just didn't try at all to be sociable.

From then on, I only had a few friends—so few that I couldn't throw a big party; so few that my mother had to invite classmates—ones who didn't even know I existed—just so I could have my dream birthday. *(cont. to next page)*

High school came. It was the age of adventure, exploration, and curiosity. I had to enter this age with no one beside me. So, I taught myself to be independent. It was scary back then, to be honest. Yet it wasn't always sad—sometimes, it was peaceful. From then, I discovered that I may forever be on the sidelines—to watch other people and just maybe dream of something for myself.

Eventually, in the twist of my own fate, I started to make friends. Real friends. Because if I hadn't taught myself how to stand still, I wouldn't have found the bravery to step forward. To speak. To stay. And slowly, the world felt less distant. From the very moment someone—a friend—approached me, I felt genuinely happy, like it was the first time.

Back then, when it was the first day of senior high school, I only had one friend with me. The reason is that my old friends and I did not get along well for some time. Casually talking with each other, I made a joke. Then a girl right in front of me laughed with us. She joined our conversation, and then suddenly, we started to just get along, and some classmates unexpectedly joined too. I began to share parts of myself—the music I loved, the books I cried over, and the skies that reminded me I was alive. In return, they shared their world with me, too. We were no longer strangers orbiting separate stories. We became part of the same chapter.

Over time, I made more friends—not the kind of friend who will stick around only when things are light.

I made friends who saw me deeply within my heart—those who saw me, even if I was not in the center; those who stayed with me on the sidelines to watch the world in its own phase and dream together for ourselves. For the very first time, I experienced the things that I had mostly dreamed of before: to have a sleepover, to go to places for fun, to share random stories, and to share the lunch table. But one thing I know for sure is that every day felt like a celebration when I shared the lunch table with them. And at least for that time, our only problem is to think about what can be served at the table.

The sidelines weren't as lonely as I once thought because there were people who joined me in it to make it extraordinary. I used to believe that standing at the edges meant being left behind, but I've learned that not everyone needs a spotlight to matter. Some people choose the sidelines—not to disappear, but to find the ones who stay. These are the ones who sit beside you without asking you to be more. They just simply stay—and that changes everything. And the greatest thing that they made me realize is even though I was not broken, they healed parts of me that ached.

We didn't talk about forever. We didn't need to. What we had was enough for the moment we were in. We shared dreams and pieces of ourselves we didn't always know how to name. And even now, when life pulls us in different directions, I still carry them with me—not as unfinished stories, but as beautiful chapters I'll always return to.

Now, when I think about being seen, I no longer picture a stage or loud applause. I picture a small group of people sitting with me. We're not performing. We're just existing. Together. And that, I've come to understand, is where the real belonging begins—not in the center but sometimes found on the sidelines.

GAYAH

by Sierra Marie Santos Aycardo

Sa paglalakbay ng buhay, may mga taong dumarating na hindi lang basta-basta kaibigan. Sila ang mga tahimik na saksi sa ating mga tagumpay at pagluha, ang mga humahawak sa ating kamay sa gitna ng unos, at hindi kailanman umaalis kahit tayo'y hindi perpekto. Sa ganitong diwa, isinilang si Gayah hindi bilang isang tiyak na tao, kundi bilang larawan nang tunay na pagkakaibigan.

Si Gayah ay simbolo ng pagkakaibigang hindi mapagkumbaba sa salita, ngunit dakila sa gawa. Siya ay nariyan sa bawat yugto ng ating buhay hindi para magpayo palagi, kundi para makinig, yumakap, o simpleng umupo sa tabi. Hindi siya umaasa ng kapalit. Kapag tayo'y nawawalan ng saysay o lakas, si Gayah ang nagbibigay linaw, kahit siya man ay may sariling dalahin.

Hindi sakim si Gayah sa oras o atensyon. Kung kailan natin kailangan ng karamay, laging naroon ang kanyang presensya tahimik ngunit matibay. Sa kanyang mga mata, may tiwala. Sa kanyang puso, may malasakit. At sa kanyang pagkilos, may wagas na pagtanggap. Kapag tayo'y bagsak, hindi siya lalayo; bagkus, lalapit pa, kahit pa hindi tayo makapagpasalamat.

Ang yakap ni Gayah ay lunas sa sakit. Hindi niya kailangang magsalita upang maramdaman ang kanyang pagdamay. Sa mga gabi ng katahimikan at pagluha, siya ang ating sandalan. Hindi palaging nakikita o naririnig si Gayah, ngunit dama ang kanyang pagkalinga—isang uri ng pagmamahal na hindi kayang tumbasan ng kahit anong bagay.

Kung may naaapi sa atin, si Gayah ang unang kakampi. Hindi niya pinapairal ang sariling kapakanan; ang mahalaga sa kanya ay ang kapakanan ng mga minamahal niya. Siya ang uri ng kaibigang handang magsakripisyo, hindi dahil hinihingi ng sitwasyon, kundi dahil iyon ang likas niyang gawin.

Hindi lang basta kaibigan si Gayah siya ay kapatid sa diwa, tahanan sa gitna ng kaguluhan, at salamin ng katapatan. Sa kanya natin nararamdaman ang kalayaan na maging totoo, mahina, masaya, o malungkot nang hindi hinuhusgahan. Siya ang nagpapaalala na hindi tayo nag-iisa.

Kaya sa bawat panalangin, isinasama natin si Gayah. Hindi bilang isang indibidwal, kundi bilang paggunita sa lahat ng tunay na kaibigang dumamay sa atin.

Hinihiling nating suklian ng langit ang kabutihang kanilang ibinahagi, mga kabutihang tumulong sa atin upang magpatuloy. Sa mundong puno ng pag-aalinlangan at pagkukunwari, si Gayah ang paalala na may mga ugnayang totoo-na may mga taong hindi kailangang palaging makita, pero kailanman ay hindi nawala.

At sa puso ng bawat taong nakaranas ng gayong pagkakaibigan, si Gayah ay buhay, hindi bilang pangalan, kundi bilang alaala ng isang ugnayang hindi matitinag ng panahon.

HABAMBUHAY NA UGNAYAN

by Maria D. Alagan

Sa ilalim ng bubong ng malaking bahay, isang pamilya puno ng tawanan at mga taong puro abala. Sa gitna ng kanilang kasayahan, malalayo ang loob nila. Tila ba wala ni isa ang tunay na naroroon. Ang malaking bahay na gawa sa pulang ladriyo, ito ang bahay na kinalakihan ko.

Nagkamulat ako na malayo sa kapatid na nakakatanda. Walang pinsan, kapitbahay, kaklase na kausap, o kalaro habang lumalaki. Hindi nakakapagtaka na ito ang magiging dahilan kung bakit hirap ako magkaron ng kaibigan. Mas pipiliin ko na magbasa ng libro, mag-isa, o mag-oberba ng mga tao sa aking paligid.

Pero sa lahat ng mga nakilala ko mula pagkabata hanggang ngayon, tatlo lang talaga ang masasabi kong tunay na kaibigan. Hindi kami araw-araw nag-uusap, at hindi rin kami palagi nagkikita. Pero kapag nagkita, parang kahapon lang ang huli naming kwentuhan.

Ang una kong kaibigan ay naging kaklase ko noong elementarya ako.

Siya'y tahimik at mahilig din magbasa ng libro katulad ko. Naging kaklase ko siya hanggang high school, at kahit iba ang kurso namin sa kolehiyo, iisa ang pinasok namin na paaralan. Ngunit kahit nasa iisa kaming kapaligiran, naging madalang ang pag-uusap. Oo, sa paglipas talaga ng panahon, nag-iiba ang takbo ng inyong buhay-may kanya-kanyang landas, may kanya-kanyang prayoridad; unti-unting nagkakalayo, hindi dahil sa away, kundi dahil sa mga bagay dala ng pagtanda. Subalit andiyan pa rin siya-minsan magpapadala ng nakakatawang video, "meme," o kaya'y mag-aayang mag-kape. Kahit sa isang beses sa isang taon lang, sapat na yun para maramdaman naming hindi pa rin nawawala ang koneksyon sa bawat isa.

Ang sumunod kong kaibigan ay nakilala ko noong high school. Katulad ng unang kaibigan ko, tahimik siya, mahilig sa libro, at masayahin. Naging magkaibigan kami, pero nawala ang madalas na komunikasyon noong nagkahiwalay kami ng kolehiyo. (ituloy sa susunod na pahina)

Siya ay naging guro at pansamantalang nagturo abroad. May mga “Kamusta ka na?” na mensahe, pero madalang. Nakita ko siya nang ikasal siya, at kahit sandali lang ang pagkikita namin, masaya akong naging parte ng espesyal na araw niya.

Kasama ng aking unang kaibigan, tatlo kaming nagkikita at nagkakaayaan na mag-kape minsan sa isang taon, o kaya’y nagka-kamustahan sa Facebook. Hindi na kasing dami ng dati ang kwento, pero yung mga alaala, yung tawanan–nandoon pa rin.

Ang aking pangatlong kaibigan ay isang taon ang tanda sa akin. Mas matanda siya, pero hindi nagkakalayo kung paano kami mag-isip. Nawala ang aming komunikasyon nang siya ay lumipat ng kolehiyo at kalaunan ay naging nars sa abroad. Matagal bago kami muling nag-usap, at social media ang naging tulay. Bihira na siya umuwi ng Pilipinas, pero oras na magkita kami, parang walang lumipas na taon. Hindi man madalas, sapat na ang minsang kamustahan para maalala naming may koneksyon pa rin kami.

May mga bago akong kaibigan. May mababait, at may sandaling naging malapit. Pero iba pa rin ang tatlong ito–sila ang pang-habambuhay ko. Sila ‘yong kahit walang mensahe sa loob ng napakaraming buwan, alam mong hindi ka nakakalimutan. Sila ‘yong kahit hindi mo kasama araw-araw, naiintindihan ka pa rin.

Sila ‘yong kapag nagkita kayo, hindi kailangan ng mahabang paliwanag. Nagkwekwentuhan lang kayo na parang kahapon lang ang huli ninyong tawanan.

Napansin kong habang tumatanda tayo, hindi lang katawan o itsura ang nagbabago; pati na rin ang anyo ng pagkakaibigan. Hindi na ito tulad noong high school na halos araw-araw ang usapan. Ngayon, may kanya-kanyang pamilya at responsibilidad. Bawat isa, mayroon nang sariling buhay.

Ngunit ang tunay na kaibigan, hindi ka iiwan, at hindi mawawala sa iyong buhay. Nagbabago lang ang anyo ng relasyon–hindi man palaging nakikita o nararamdaman, pero palaging nasa tabi mo kapag kailangan ng sasandalan.

Ang pagkakaibigang tunay ay hindi nasusukat sa madalas niyong pag-uusap o pagkikita; sinusukat ito sa lalim ng inyong koneksyon–kung paano kayo patuloy na nagkakaintindihan kahit magkaka-hiwalay na ng mundong iniikutan.

At para sa akin, sapat na iyon para masabing hindi lang ito ordinaryong pagkakaibigan. Isa itong ugnayang pang-habambuhay.

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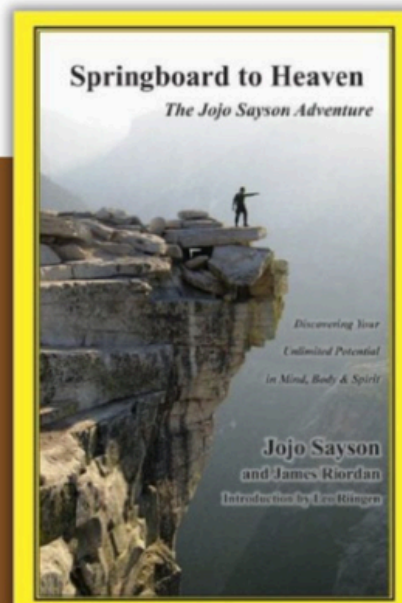
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- Brig. General (Ret.) Niru Pandeya, Flight Surgeon, Iowa Air National Guard

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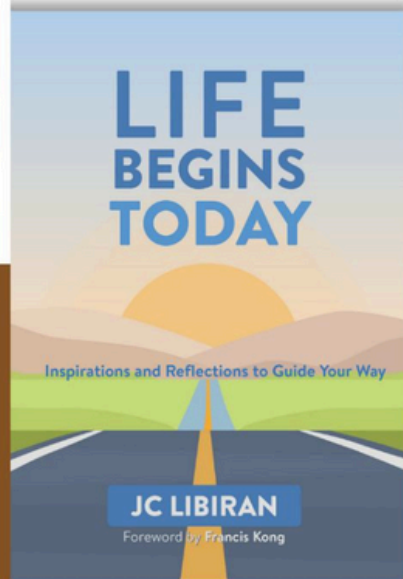
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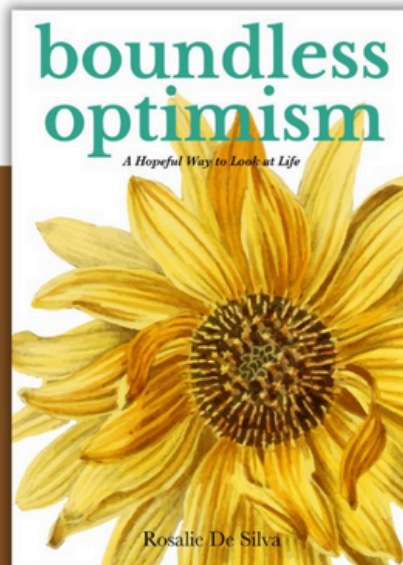


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SCRIBBLING FROM MEMORY

HEARTS IN HARMONY

by Marites D. Carlos

Through morning breaks and evening sighs,
They found their truth where duty lies.
Beyond the board and structured lines,
Their laughter made the dullness shine.

They shared their joys in simple things—
Like students' smiles and learning wings.
In every test, in every plan,
They built each other's inner span.

As teachers changed and seasons turned,
Their steady hearts forever burned.
In every word of care and praise,
They found the light of better days.

From staff room talks to quiet walks,
They turned their trials into talks.
The years have carved their bond in stone—
A friendship deeply, firmly grown.

Though soon the halls may know them less,
Their legacy is happiness.
For hearts like theirs will always be
A chapter in life's harmony.

THREADS OF FOREVER

by Kimverly M. Pineda

In cradle's whisper and youthful bloom,
Where laughter echoes in the morning room,
Hearts meet in a reckless cheer,
And sew a bond both gleam and clear.

Muddy shoes and secret codes,
Through dreams hushed on moonlit roads,
The roots grew deep in woven ground,
Where bliss and despair are both found.

Time runs forward, as it must do—
From tales of school to skies of blue.
The threads go a long way but do not break,
Though distance tests the paths they take.

In shifting sands of timely strife,
Between warmth and loss—the forging of life—
A friend is more than just a name:
A mirror, a home, and a holy flame.

Not always near, not always loud,
But felt beneath each rolling cloud.
A presence as gentle as evening air,
That keeps you close, though not always there.

Through each phase, the old roots grow;
Hair turns grey, and steps grow slow.
And in the silence of twilight's dome,
There's one who still feels just like home.

Allow the seasons to twist and bend—
Time does not erode a friend.
It molds us into something vast:
A soul who knew you, first to last.

A FRIEND

by Maria Cristina A. Mayores

We met as strangers,
And now we're bound together,
Sharing limitless stories—
About life and TV series.

We've had a share of laughter,
And it keeps on getting better.
We've seen each other's tears,
And we always say, "Never fear."

Your company makes work feel lighter—
I think we share the same agenda.
It's funny that by a simple look,
We already got the hint on the hook.

In the few years I've known you,
I must say—I'm glad I met you.
We have this strong connection
That I know will last a lifetime.

Wherever life may take us,
This friendship will live on.
And if you ever feel sad and alone,
Just know—you've got someone to lean on.

Friends are like sprinkles on ice cream,
Or dessert after a heavy meal—
Someone who makes life more exciting
When life gets a little boring.

ANATOMY OF AN ARROW

by Ma. Elena Yussay

Nock

Nurturant friendships are flowers that bloom in eternal unison.
Obnoxious palholes are anchors that bind us to drown.
Can we see toxic ties through rose-colored glasses?
Kissing our own knives helps us slice through friendly illusions.

Shaft

Sincerity is valued in circles of the covenant's blood;
Hoodwinkers shall not be entertained anymore.
Altruistic exchanges are like soup kitchens—
Filling the bowls of hungry hearts with nutritious meals.
Timeless bonds can mend shattered, glassy souls.

Fletchings

Food made by trustworthy companions can be uplifting—
Letting their love radiate through dishes and desserts.
Every ingredient is an expression of affection:
Thyme to encourage bravery and strength,
Cloves for protection and luck, and
Helichrysum to help us endure and remember glimmers.
Infusing good intentions can make stews scrumptious.
Negativity results in unpalatable bites.
Good-natured friends are the best chefs—
Specializing in vibrant cuisine for life's banquets.

Point

Platonic soulmates are met at unexpected times—
Opportune moments in crevices.
It can happen between the pour of coffee into a cup—
Numinous events beyond physics.
Thriving with them can transform us into gladioli.

Crest

Compassionate confidants can get us through obstacles.
Relying on their guidance is a lamp we carry in the darkness—
Enlightening paths that bring us closer to our goals.
Step by step, they walk with us through a field of yellow roses;
Together, we act as one another's lighthouses.

MARY ANGEL, THE SOUL SISTER

by J.

Meekness of meeking is in your eyes,
And we always laugh like yesterday's present—
Resting in today's shared memories, then
Yearning for our better future, hoping we wouldn't be each other's ephemeral
Ataraxic vain. I remember—we were discussing a certain topic, where a
Neglected subject evoked our tongues to tackle it.
Getting into the labyrinth of ink, staying up late to
Enter the world of subjective happiness amid chaos.
Letting ourselves devour our freedom of speech as we looked into each other's eyes—
Tinted grief, melancholic sacrifices, and a solitude of
Hypophora. We were dreaming. We romanticized who we were becoming, and lately, we
Engaged ourselves in redundant questions that had been living inside our heads,
Sitting on the wooden chairs as we whispered into the dancing air.
Oh, I wish you'd be my lifetime soul sister. Because through our
Unending care, purest appreciation, and abysmal learnings,
Literally—we won the best view in life: to look forward to the best version of ourselves.
Seeing ourselves striving so hard—not to
Intimidate the people around us, but to prove the friendship we built is
Soul-searching, an abode, a sanctuary, a kismet
To the dreams we keep on dreaming, living, and preparing. We
Evolve—we evolve our friendship into the kismet of our
Realistic bonds. You are the soul I'd keep, even in my hereafter.

THREE POEMS FOR ONE'S FRIENDS

by Dennis Espada

Invisible Pal

Dear Guardian Angel,
invisible pal
to a lonely heart,
console me with
a name that saves,
a name that heals,
a name so sweet,

a name so efficacious,
a name so strong,
a name so peaceful,
a name so powerful,
a name so glorious,
a name so triumphant...

Friends in Our Midst

Many, if not all, realize sooner or later
that friends hurt each other in any way,
not always together through thick and thin,
not accepting one another, no matter what.

They come and go, but we're not left alone;
wounds mend itself through forgiveness;
empty spaces are filled with the divine;
the faithful rescues, listens, and builds up.

A friend of the world sinks into a wasteland;
wild debauchery of users who didn't care—
triggering haughty tongues of egocentrics
and the promiscuous ones to settle for lust.

The Lord calls friends as no longer servants;
He finds shelter a treasure beyond price—
to convert stony hearts into pillars of love
and so animate our cross to the other side.

A Friend Whispers Aloud

A friend whispers aloud,
not to proselytize,
but to sort out
what's true and hypocritical;
to glorify the Most High
by loving others,
and hold on
to what's good and eternal.

KAIBIGAN

by Aurora Silvazion

*Kaibigang tunay kayhirap hanapin sa ating panahon,
Dahil ang marami ay hindi totoo at 'di tulad noon.
Hanggang kamatayan ang pagsasamahan ay di naluluoy,
Sa lahat ng oras ay laging nadamay saan man naroon.*

*Kapag may mali ka, 'di kinukunsinti ng iyong kaibigan.
Sinasabihan ka na iyong tigilan mga maling bagay,
Kahit na masakit ay sinasabi n'ya nang harap-harapan.
Mga puna sa 'yong tagos nga sa puso't kaloob-looban.*

*Mula pagkabata, siya ang kasama sa lahat ng bagay.
Nangangaral sayo't tagapagtanggol mo kapag may kaaway.
Kung kapos sa pera at mayro'ng problema, 'di na sasabihan.
Alam n'ya kung kailan dapat s'yang tumulong sayo't umalalay.*

*Kapag nagtagumpay ay makikisaya sa iyong narating,
'Di tulad ng iba na sisiraan ka't kukumpetensyahin.
Dahil kaibigan, tunay nagagalak sa tagumpay mo rin.
Walang halong inggit, kundi kabutihan ang kanyang hangarin.*

*Kahit 'di kadugo, ang turing sa iyo'y isa nang kapatid,
Kaya't pag kailangan ay tutulong sa'yo, di ka matitiis.
Ganyan ang kaibigan-handang umalalay, di ipagpapalit.
Magandang samahang binuo ninyo dahil sanggang-dikit.*

PARA SA AKING MGA KAIBIGAN

ni Ley Tulip

*Para sa aking mga kaibigan,
Buhay ay gumaan,
At naging marahan,
Salamat kayo ay nandiyan.*

*Salamat sa inyong tulong,
Upang sarili ay huwag ikulong.
Sa mga karanasang muntik nang umurong,
Ngayon, lumalaban nang pasulong.*

*Sigla ay nanunumbalik,
Puso ay nasasabik.
Makita kayong muli,
Sa mga kuwentuhan hindi magpapahuli,
Masasayang alaala ay mananatili.*

*Pasasalamat ang nasasambit ng mga labi.
Hindi na lumuluha at humihikbi
Sa tuwing sumasapit ang kadiliman ng gabi,
Dahil kasama ko kayo sa aking tabi.*

*Hindi man laging nagkikita,
Araw-araw sa isipa'y nakapinta
Ang mga sandaling tayo ay magkakasama.
Pagmamahal sa isa't-isa ay damang-dama.*

JULY 2025

MEMENTO

MENTOR'S CORNER

(Writing pieces of Scribbly mentors)

MILES APART

by Jennifer A. Sun, Devotional Writing Mentor

“Sinong best friend mo doon? Syempre, ikaw lang!” This '90s TV commercial holds such a beautiful place in my heart. Growing up, I did not have too many friends. I am quite the introvert. Or should I say, was quite the introvert. I was too shy to speak up. I was too scared to approach people. And I was too lazy to look for a friend. If you ask me, I have a very vague memory of how my best friend and I came to share that special kind of friendship. Brem, a very simple and also quiet classmate whom I grew to love more and more through the years, eventually claimed the title “best friend.”

I have vivid memories of how our friendship strengthened. We walked to Tutuban Mall together to buy some stuff on a sunny day in December. My dad was the strict Chinese-Filipino dad who would not entrust me to just anyone. That day, when I told him I was going with Brem, he nodded in approval. What was in Brem that was not in anyone else? What did she do to get his “yes”? We spent about an hour walking past stores in Tutuban, going to one of our favorite places there—National Book Store! We got what we needed and walked back to our small store near the school.

High school held many vague memories of our friendship, too. I must have had amnesia at some point in my life, and I really cannot recall too many things we did together, except maybe that we would call each other and have a fun time doing “*telebabad*”. Or I would walk to her house and visit her, and end up chatting with her whole family. But I knew that she remained to be the one I called my best friend.

Then came college, we studied in the same university, different programs, with buildings next to each other.

Yet, the times we actually bumped into each other in school can be counted on one hand. She graduated a year ahead of me. And off we went to the corporate world. There was this meaningful silence we shared. Our friendship was not the loud kind—we did not spend too much time in the bar or on the beach. But we knew that when something was not right, we had each other’s backs. When we received good news, we knew how to reach each other, too.

When we knew that she was off to Canada, for a few years, then for good, no one shed a tear. From the outside looking in, maybe you would doubt the genuineness of our friendship. We were not ones to cry buckets of tears in the airport, wanting to be put in each other’s luggage. But we just knew that, though we may be miles apart from each other, our friendship will remain.

I wish I could say we kept in touch daily and called each other up. But the truth is, we didn’t. We sometimes spent a few minutes chatting on Messenger, but after a few exchanges, we needed to go about our day, as we are in different time zones. One thing is for sure, though, when either of us had big news to share, we had ways to get hold of one another. When we had down moments, we found a safe place in each other, too.

So this is what low-maintenance friendship is. You don’t need words. You don’t need physical presence. You just need your heart.

And, yes... *Sinong best friend mo doon? Syempre, ikaw lang, Brem!* And I know your answer will be the same... *ikaw lang, Jen.*

THE GIFT OF GOOD FRIENDS: A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES

*by Aiko Hara, Fiction Writing
Facilitator/Administrator*

“Good friends are like stars. You don’t always see them, but you know they’re always there.”

This quote always comes to mind whenever I think of my good friends.

Good friends are very hard to find. Sometimes they are just around you, but you just can’t seem to notice them.

I remember when I graduated from high school, I wasn’t even sure if I’d ever make it to college. We were struggling financially, and I thought I would have to give up the dream of earning a degree. But then my aunt, my grandmother’s sister, stepped in. She believed in me—said I was smart and hardworking—and offered to send me to college. That moment changed everything.

When I finally went to enroll, I didn’t know which course to take. I was a late enrollee, hence I only had two choices: Information Technology or Information Management. Since I already had some experience with computers, I chose Information Technology.

That decision led me to the best thing college gave me: my good friends.

We were all “late enrollees,” which put us in the last section of the college freshmen. There were only about 20 of us in class, so it was easy to stick together during breaks, vacants, and after school. I had always been shy, never the type to have a big group of friends. In elementary and high school, I barely had any close ones.

Honestly, I thought college would be the same. But with them, it felt different. For the first time, I felt I truly belonged.

Good friends are those who are always there when you need someone to talk to. Good friends say a lot more about you – whether good or bad – because that’s how they open up to you and let you know of all the things that will be best for you.

With them, I could open up about anything. I didn’t have siblings to share my thoughts with, so they became my safe space. Sometimes they would tease me or laugh before giving advice, but that was their way of comforting me—and it worked every time.

Good friends are your companions on every occasion. They will make time for you because you are important to them.

We made time for each other. If there was a party, we went as a group. Because of them, I enjoyed college life so much more—even if it sometimes meant making excuses to my mom about “group projects.”

No one was ever left out. We were always together. The only times I missed out were when my mom wouldn’t let me go out at night, or when I had to go home early. My friends would tease me and convince me to stay longer. Sometimes I did stay late, only to be nervous on the way home, but it was worth it because I had so much fun with them.

Good friends may have the same or repeating stories every time you talk with each other, but every moment feels like the first time when you're with them.

We would repeat stories again and again during our catch-ups, adding new details or laughing at the same parts as if it were the first time. We even gossiped sometimes, not to hurt anyone, just for fun.

These good friends led me to places I had never seen, stories I had never heard, moments I had never captured, and experiences I had never dared to try before.

Every moment with them felt like I was a bird finally set free, my wings flapping as I soared wherever the wind took me. Even though I often felt like a caged bird in life, whenever I was with them, I forgot about the cage. I just wanted to keep flying, to explore, to live every moment fully with them.

I may not have done everything I wished to do earlier in life, but I'm thankful for these friends who made my college years brighter. They gave me laughter, comfort, adventure, and a little taste of freedom I'll cherish forever.



JULY 2025

A photograph of a group of people dining at an outdoor restaurant at night. The scene is framed by a large, light-colored archway. String lights hang above the table. In the background, a sign on a pole reads "CASTELL MEDIEVALE" and "VISTA SICATE". The people are seated around a table with white tablecloths, glasses, and plates. A man with a long white beard and a black cap is seated in the center. A woman with long dark hair is seated next to him. A man with glasses is seated on the right. A woman with long blonde hair is seated on the far right. A man with long hair and glasses is seated on the left. The overall atmosphere is warm and intimate.

FICTION STORY SECTION

ORION'S ARCHIVE: A SERIES (#17)

by Ulysses Sejano

"Selena! It's done. It's safe."

My friend leans on the newly painted azure walls and turns to face me. Her long, ebony hair is frazzled and messy, like a spider's web, and frames the pale terror quivering in her eyes. Her rosy red lips, often curved to a smile, now sink and tremble; worse, her cheeks have gone pale.

I look down and see her left leg bent, with the toes of her sneakers lifted off the floor. No wonder she had not gotten far.

"Here." I offer Selena my staff as a makeshift crutch and lower her to carry her over my shoulder. I take a tentative step as I slowly support her lithe frame over my masculine traps. I hold her close, an assurance that I am a rock. Strong and sturdy against the chaotic winds of frenzy.

"It's my ankle. I sprained it at the girls' washroom." She explains over the rattle of the steel locker door that holds back Troy from his madness. I look back just to be certain, but his prison still holds him back. I almost miss a few details that Selena had said.

"That new girl. She shoved me out the door and had a fight with Evelyn."

"The one with the soliloquy and the bad haircut?" I frowned at the thought. It was barely into lunch break. With Troy and his axe going on a rampage and even before that, a cat fight in the lady's room.

I bite back the jape of wondering what was driving the entire school nuts.

Selena and I look around the empty halls. Maybe there is a classroom nearby that we could hide in. But the lights are closed and I could see a barricade of hoisted chairs and tables covering the door's lite. If we are lucky, the cops are probably here by now.

"Did we miss a memo—but when did everyone start to audition for Mortal Combat?" She rambles. I smile at her little joke. Stress banter. Adrenaline can do wonders and horrors to the mind.

Apparently, one of them is bad jokes. Yet, even then, I couldn't fight off the chuckle that escapes my own better senses or the wry smile that sneaks up on me.

I look at Selena. It dawns on me that she is alive, joking and quipping beside me after we just encountered a crazed teenager who was all too eager to lop off heads with a fire axe on the first day of school.

"Do you think Eric is ok?" asks Selena. She shudders, but not from the cold. A cat fight and then Troy goes nuts." I didn't see him anywhere.

"He wasn't anywhere in the halls. I am sure he is fine. Besides, how many more crazies are there in this school?"

There is a slamming sound that echoes from the left corner of the hall. It is rough and robust, and bangs with the slow cadence of a medieval war drum.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Heavy steps ring around the halls, and a boy. Burly as a monster truck and tall as a door frame, it looks at the two of us.

His fist runs red with blood, and his mouth froths like a rabid beast. I shudder to think of what led to this state of him. He must have been fighting, and I feel a cold chill run down my spine. His black, form-fitted shirt—now torn and tattered—exposes a honed body dedicated to the science of pain and dominance.

Kurt ‘the Bane’ Stone, captain of the school wrestling team, looks at us with his bloodshot eyes and his fists creak a little tighter.



JULY 2025

MEMENTO

Publishing Section



WHAT TYPE OF AUTHOR ARE YOU?

by Felz Etorne, Founder of Metacognia

This July marks my fifth year of running my small publishing business. In the past five years, I met several aspiring and first-time authors who fall into different archetypes based on their displayed behaviors and mindsets when I talked or worked with them. I believe most, if not all, of them don't realize they fall into these categories.

Just a disclaimer, the archetypes I described below are not meant to cage certain authors into these categories, nor do I have any intention of mocking them. I wrote about them for entertainment purposes only. I just came up with these labels for fun, and they were just a result of my observations upon talking to different kinds of authors due to my line of work.

Below are the different archetypes of authors that I have encountered so far in my five years in the publishing industry.

1. The One-Time Wonder

They are the ones who were able to publish a book once and were already content to stop at it. For most of them, they only want to write a book as a legacy they could leave behind. Some of them are already having a hard time following through with their first work and just end up procrastinating working on a second book, mainly because they experienced it already, and that was enough. For others, probably, the publishing costs have burned them, and they are not so keen on going through the same risks again.

2. Perpetual Drafters

They may not be considered as actual authors because they have not finished their drafts yet. From the phrase itself, they are constantly revising and never publishing. Their books have never seen the light of day, and their circles are probably wondering when it will be published. On second thought, they might have already been authors who were able to publish their first book but were taking forever to finish their sequels—that is, if there ever will be. Sad to say, there are some whose books just end up on the back burner and a forgotten dream.

3. Kickstarters

I have no other way to sugarcoat it—these are authors who had their zeal in the beginning. But somewhere along the way, the spark has died down, and they just never get to finish. The fire that used to ignite them was suddenly gone, and they don't know anymore how to pick up where they left off. Some of them are now questioning if this is still their dream or if there is even a point in finishing it. For some, the tide has simply turned, and they're not up for it anymore.

4. The Business Card Holder

Nobody can deny that authoring a book can give someone some sense of credibility, no matter what field he or she is in. These are mostly marketers, business owners, thought leaders, influencers, politicians—name it!

They have the capacity to gain traction for their books because of their expertise and influence. Publishing their book itself is not the main end goal; that is just part of their strategy to attract clients to their main line of work or business. This may just be a short-term goal or an experiment for them. They believe their books can be their business cards, hence the label.

5. Missionary

These authors are the ones I admire the most! They took it upon themselves to write and publish books as their mission in life. Their first book is just a catalyst that paved the way for them to write and publish more. They're passionate individuals who never cared about the actual costs for them to reproduce their works. Writing, for them, is synonymous with breathing and has already become something they cannot live without. They wouldn't think about whether they'd become bestsellers or not. As long as they can put their work out there, that would be rewarding enough.

6. Visionary

They're the types of authors who cannot start without painting the big picture of their book or story. They need to flesh out everything—from the plot to character developments. These authors need to constantly brainstorm and get feedback for their work. Having accountability partners or groups works best for them. Nevertheless, it's still not a guarantee they can see through writing or publishing their books.

7. Living-the-Dream

Need I say more? Simply put, they're the authors who made it to traditional publishing, whether locally or internationally.

They're hard workers and have failed several times before finally signing a book deal and making a name for themselves. This is indeed the dream that many aspiring authors clamor for, but not everyone has the grit to back it up. Becoming an author this way once in a lifetime is probably enough. But the price to pay has indeed been high through blood, sweat, and tears. Only a commitment like no other can see a dream like this through an author who makes it here because "that dream" may take a lifetime to fulfill... Or not at all.

8. Best-Selling-Author-in-the-Making

This is almost the same as the one I described under missionary, or a combination of the missionary and business card holder. It may also be some parts of both combined. This type of author has just basically been winging it—writing, publishing, and selling their books one after another. For some reason, they have found business in book publishing, which is supposed to be the case because publishing is the business side of being an author. They're authors with an entrepreneurial mindset, and some of them are self-published authors or started as one.

9. Prophetic Dreamer

These are authors who have the good fortune of remembering stories and characters from their dreams—as in when they slept, the story and characters unfolded, and they were able to capture them on paper (when they woke up, of course). Hence, those stories became concrete—actual books or stories in print. Others weren't able to capture them as soon as they awoke, so those stories and characters just slipped through their fingers, so to speak.

True story. I encountered only a few of them, and as amazing as they are, this phenomenon has only been so rare. I would advise aspiring authors not to wait for a prophetic dream just to have a story or book to write about. Besides, the books of these authors only came to life through hard work, dedication, and commitment to the craft.

10. Disillusioned Plagiarist

Sad to say, not all authors are good examples. I also encountered these kinds of authors who claimed or copied someone else's work. These are the types who repurpose some written works they found online, or worse, the work of another author they know. I even heard a story of an author who, after refurbishing someone else's written work, submitted that piece to an award-giving body. This is a big no-no! Never stoop down to this level just to call yourself an author and claim you have published a book. I admit that not all authors are good writers; for that, some best-selling authors even hired ghost writers in order to write their manuscripts due to their erratic schedules.

Ghost writing is very different from plagiarism and is a legit kind of work with adherence to a non-disclosure agreement between the author and ghostwriter. A plagiarist has no originality and just recreates ideas not their own. These types of authors—if they can still call themselves that—have no integrity in their work. A disillusioned one, who even expects external recognition such as the example I cited, is even worse!

I am sure these aren't all of them. There are more types that I have not included here or encountered yet. If in any case, as an aspiring author or a seasoned author, you find yourself belonging to any of the categories above, I hope you find it as an opportunity for a deeper reflection on finding what you want in life or where you want to go in this industry. For self-awareness purposes, I hope you find the path that suits you best and be the kind of author you want to become the most.

If you have questions or suggestions, you can reach me via email at metacognia2013@gmail.com, or reach out to me through the following social media handles: @metacognia on Instagram or Facebook.

JULY 2025

MEMENTO

WRITING TIPS

Writing Tip 26:

FIVE HABITS OF A HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE ASPIRING AUTHOR WITH A DAY JOB

Scribblory
SCRAMBLING FROM MEMORY



1. Write daily, inspired or not.

It doesn't matter how bad you start.
What matters is you start writing.
Once you learn how to quickly slip
into writing regardless of your
mood, it'll become easier for you to
produce words anytime, anywhere—
before or after your work hours.

Remember: First drafts don't have
to be perfect.

Scribblory
SCRAMBLING FROM MEMORY

Need help with implementing these tips?
Get a writing mentor today.
Email your writing goals to scribblory@gmail.com

2. Exercise weekly.

When your body is in good condition, your brain is too. Exercise not only increases the blood circulation in the brain, it also prompts the brain to produce happy hormones. What's more is it teaches you discipline. So, plot it in your calendar. It could be after work or a few hours during your rest day.

Read up about how Haruki Murakami runs an hour every day, six days a week.

Scribbloory
Signature Memento



3. Read for fun as often as you can.

Writer's block comes more often when you don't pair up writing with reading. The two have to come together, according to Stephen King. Keep your love for words by exposing yourself to works you like.

Surely, you can make time for something you're excited about.

Read in the middle of morning traffic, or during your break time, or before sleeping at night.

Scribbloory
Signature Memento

4. Keep your creative notes visible and reachable.

Your day job will take your mind away from your book, and that's okay. That space will help your brain to not overthink it. Once you need to come back to it, however, make sure you'll have everything in 'that world' visible and reachable.

Creative notes don't only include written ideas but also pictures of your inspiration, quotes, or playlists.

Scribblogy
Scramble your Memento



5. Plan for quick but quality writing breaks.

Writing a book can be hard, but it shouldn't be too much of a burden for you. Burning yourself out will not help you write a good book. Worse, it might not even help you finish the book! So, make sure to plan for artist's dates, spend time with your loved ones, or assign a day when you won't write or think about writing at all.

Scribblogy
Scramble your Memento



Need help with establishing these habits? Get a book writing mentor today. Email your writing goals to scribblory@gmail.com.



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The Vanishing Island and Other Stories **by Alex M. Castillo**

“This is a work of fiction based on my childhood memories growing up in a farming village in Capul Island in Northern Samar, Philippines. Most of the stories are based on my own experiences and of the people I grew up with. So, if the reader could identify themselves in these pages, I may have been inspired by them. I have long wanted to document the colorful traditions of my hometown as I have written them in my journals. I believe I have written a collective experience of my people in these stories that took me several years to print.”

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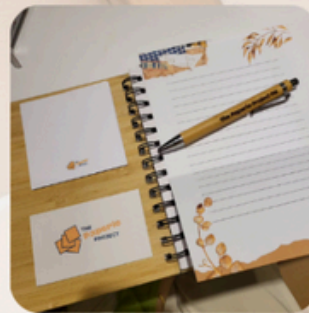
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