

11-8-19 Friends

*Make new friends and keep the old. One is silver and the other gold.*

How true that is! In recent years, it has been interesting to see the many reconnections with childhood and high school friends. Many of us were out of touch as we raised families and worked on our careers. Now, it is a strange mix of more time for friendships, while others moving far away to that retirement place and so, no sooner did we start reconnecting, they were gone! How would we stay in touch?

While young people are using quick glimpses of life with Snapchat and Instagram, us older folks continue to use Facebook, and its messenger, even more than before, as a way of making connections and staying in touch. And that is important.

We can choose how to use social media. We don't have to use it for complaining, being sarcastic, being mean, telling lies, starting scandals or making fun of people for their politics. We can choose to ignore all that and use it in positive ways.

In addition to making connections and staying connected via social media, the forged and maintained friendships provide a support system. There are caring messages, thoughtful suggestions and fun get togethers.

Having friends is associated with better health! It reduces stress and increases the life span.

I think most would argue though that the increased lifespan may not mean much without quality friends and quality activities.

Have you ever wondered about those people dedicated to making sure the activities at your local library and Council on Aging are engaging and rewarding? They appear to be having a lot of fun providing those activities. That is a gift, for sure. They have a gift for organizing those happenings and they are also giving loving and memorable gifts to young and old who have fun and can forge new friendships while maintaining the old.

Both are necessary, especially for the elderly. The elderly appreciates the bond with long- time friends, the shared memories and experiences and yet they are so often sad about the frequent losses. New friends may never replace the old

friends, but they certainly can help fill the gap, restore their faith in humans and society and reinvigorate an interest in life!

This weekend, as I join some high school classmates, I am going to suggest that we sing the full Girl Scout song. Wish me luck! It might be great, or they might think me goofy! As we age, we are more willing to take such a small silly risk, but I am hoping for longevity and quality of life by seeing them and singing this song!

It goes like this:

### **Make New Friends**

Make new friends,  
But keep the old.  
One is silver,  
The other is gold.

A circle is round,  
It has no end.  
That's how long,  
I will be your friend.

A fire burns bright,  
It warms the heart.  
We've been friends,  
From the very start.

You have one hand,  
I have the other.  
Put them together,  
We have each other.

Silver is precious,  
Gold is too.  
I am precious,  
And so are you.

You help me,  
And I'll help you  
And together  
We will see it through.

The sky is blue  
The Earth is green  
I can help  
To keep it clean.

Across the land  
Across the sea  
Friends forever  
We will always be.

I had forgotten about the pledge to keeping the earth clean, but it fits right in, more than ever for what is needed! My “old” friends would agree, and I am thankful for that.

If Facebook goes away, we will adjust. Maybe we will form email groups, share pictures and, who knows, maybe even return to hand-written cards and letters. Letters maintained bonds over the centuries and they still can.

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