

Wondrous Women Friends

Patricia Morgan 2002

The hot reading and movie of last summer was *The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* authored by Rebecca Wells. Well, maybe it wasn't so popular with males but certainly my women friends were a buzz with talk of the "sisterhood." Consensus was that the movie was enriched by first reading this delightful novel about friendship. Women friendship not only provides support and connection but a certain kind of intellectual stimulation, not unlike that described in *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman. He states, "Our humanity is most evident in our feelings." My experience of women friends is that I have had some of my most human moments and tender feelings honoured when with them.

I sat with my women group, the six of us, consuming our shared lunch by the bank of the Bow River. We're a lucky bunch of bodacious and babbling broads to have a member who has river property. There's certain etiquette even with familiar women friends, yet there is vulnerability, honesty, secrets revealed, agreement, enthusiastic disagreement, celebration of our differences and sometimes, wine.

It seems to me that women are catching up to discover and share their real and lived experience. Perhaps the world will become healthier as we embrace the truth of our lives. In the meantime, I have a sense that I am steadier and wiser through the strength of the listening ears and cheerleading comments of the collective. Here are some of the ideas that were ignited or reignited after a summer afternoon with my women friends:

- a) A safe environment allows the soul to show itself.
- b) There is a love that transcends race, age, sex and other barriers our belief making minds can create.
- c) When women's apparel, often designed to make us look a certain way, is discomfoting it is OK to remove it. Watch the joy of your women friends.
- d) Clothes come in many forms of "uniform"-- for corporate work, for trades-type work, for sports, for lounging, for celebrative occasions and to send sexual messages. Why do some women shy totally away from wearing sexy clothing while others wear it inappropriately?
- e) What is our responsibility to our daughters about the messages they send with clothing? How do our sons fit into this picture?
- f) To mark the transition from child to adult at eighteen years, a parent can create a "life book" with photos, memories and advice from family members and others. The rights and responsibilities of becoming an adult in that province and in Canada can be added.

- g) Women need to define for themselves who they are and how they want to be treated. To be labeled a “sweet little thing” may be useful for a partner and the in-laws but is it supportive to you?
- h) Partnerships require investment of time and care. So do friendships.
- i) You are never too old to learn a new skill or go back to school.
- j) Often when women are accused of gossiping they are merely sharing concern for a mutual friend and sometimes strategizing how to help. Malicious gossip where women revel in the misfortune of another is rare.
- k) Personal stories of pain, mistakes, misunderstandings and concerns make for meaningful sharing.
- l) Sometimes we don’t know what is best emotionally, physically, mentally or spiritually for ourselves or our loved ones. Sometimes we just need to settle for acceptance of ourselves and our connections.
- m) Laughter is the sweet cherry in the fruit compote when time is spent with women friends.

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