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## Friendship, Forgiveness and Fences: Healing a Past Hurt

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## Friendship, Forgiveness and Fences: Healing a Past Hurt

By **Camille Dolan**  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, March 10, 2020

Even if you made some mistakes, hopefully they can be forgiven.



(Photo by Harli Marten of Unsplash)

I reached out to an old friend a few days ago – someone I swore to myself that I would never talk to again. This is someone I had known for 40 years, who I sort of dated in high school, but it never really went anywhere.

This is a cautionary tale. Be forewarned. Mistakes were made, mostly mine. Even if you have made mistakes, they can be forgiven. But I digress.

For his birthday one year, I gave him a handmade certificate good for a dinner with me. He redeemed it, but never gave it back to me and carried it around, dogeared, in his wallet for many years.

I imagined him telling the story about our fancy dinner when he was with his friends.

I went away to college and he stayed close to our old high school. We called each other, before social media was a thing. And then, when it became a thing, became “friends” and “liked” each other’s photos.

He and his wife even came over for dinner with my husband and me. It was a good night. I pictured the four of us growing old together, having cookouts, swapping photos of grandbabies.

We lost touch after they moved to Tennessee. Still there was the occasional Facebook “like,” but really, I was too busy with my own life to pay his much attention.

Until I realized that he hadn’t posted anything in a while.

I scrutinized his social media, but I didn’t have to look too far. He was recently divorced. In fact, by my calculations, he and I had gone through divorces at almost the same time. He had moved back to the area.

What first felt like righteous anger gradually ebbed away to pettiness, and then, finally, grief that I had lost a true friend.

We commiserated, as people do in this situation. We were both angry and hurt and rehashed the details that no one else wanted to hear (again). We talked about the birthday coupon.

Soon, he called me to tell me that he was dating again. It was very strange to me. I had suddenly lost my venting buddy. I don’t think I was jealous of his new relationship, except maybe jealous that I didn’t have one first.

When he canceled birthday plans with me, I was hurt, and instead of behaving like an adult, I behaved like the teenager I was when we first met. I blocked him, deleted his account and erased him in every way I could think of.

That was 18 months ago.

What first felt like righteous anger gradually ebbed away to pettiness, and then, finally, grief that I had lost a true friend.

Last week I emailed him with a long-overdue apology. An agonizing four hours later, I got his response. It was kinder than I deserved and made me realize that he was still my friend, that he would always be my friend.

“I nearly broke my thinker trying to figure out what I must have done to offend you,” he wrote. “I don’t want to lose you as a friend.”

To those of you out there with a similar experience, don’t break your thinker.

Reach out today, mend that fence. We need each other more than we know.

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