



The Gift of Friendship: Stories That Celebrate the Beauty of Shared Moments

Dawn Camp (Editor), Jennifer Lee (Foreword)

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Whether next door or in the next time zone, our friends provide some of our most important relationships. We cherish time spent with them, endure time spent apart, and look forward to the next time we can have coffee or rush to greet them as they walk toward our door. And nothing warms our hearts like reading stories of true friendship.

Collecting over fifty true stories from some of today's best writers, Dawn Camp offers readers a chance to sit back and experience the gift of friendship. With its beautiful photographs and poignant prose, this collection is a great gift for a dear friend and the perfect pick-me-up any time you need a boost. Contributors include Crystal Paine, Liz Curtis Higgs, Tsh Oxenreider, Myquillyn Smith, Jennifer Dukes Lee, Lisa-Jo Baker, Jessica Turner, Lysa TerKeurst, Bonnie Gray, Holley Gerth, Renee Swope, and many more.

The Gift of Friendship: Stories That Celebrate the Beauty of Shared Moments Details

Date : Published February 16th 2016 by Fleming H. Revell Company

ISBN : 9780800723804

Author : Dawn Camp (Editor) , Jennifer Lee (Foreword)

Format : Hardcover 224 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Christian, Christian Non Fiction, Inspirational, Christian Living

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Stacie says

I couldn't possibly get through life without my girlfriends. I have friends that I've known since childhood, friends from college that I've reconnected with because our kids are in the same school, best friends and casual friends, and friends for all seasons of my life. Each one fills a need in my heart and knows just what to say or do at just the right time. When we moved to this small community over twelve years ago, I was nervous about leaving my friends behind, knowing that with some of them, I would lose that daily connection, but hoping that new friends would fill that gap. There is always that trepidation about introducing yourself and trying to find that connection with a new person. Thankfully, I have been blessed to be surrounded by an amazing group of women in my community that I consider to be some of my closest friends.

Friendship is born at that moment when one says to another: "What! You too?"

C.S. Lewis

This collection of stories from well-known Christian authors, celebrates everything that friendship is about. It celebrates those moments when a friend knows just what to say when you're hurting, it acknowledges those moments when you are feeling vulnerable, and reminds you not to compare yourself to other moms in this "pinterest perfect" society. There are plenty of stories that you can identify with. I expect many of them will encourage you to reconnect with a friend when a story reminds you of a certain friendship or memory.

I had one particular story that resonated quite strongly with me and that was the one by Melissa Michaels. Her story of "Lessons in Hospitality from my Hairstylist" brought me to tears. Many of us wouldn't think of our hairstylist as our friend, but I sure did. Mary was my hairstylist for many years and I looked forward to seeing her every six weeks, catching up on our lives, sharing both the good and the bad. She was a friend to me while I was an exhausted stay-at-home mom. I wasn't always able to have my appointments without the kids tagging along and she never minded. The kids adored her and she always had a drawer full of cookies ready for them. This story hit me emotionally because Mary died of an aneurysm just five years ago. In fact, the day I read this story was the on that five year anniversary. Michaels's story reminded me of how much I miss that friendship but yet so thankful I had it at that time in my life. Mary was the epitome of hospitality and kindness as a hairstylist and a friend and I miss her dearly.

As you can imagine, there are numerous other stories that will remind you of the joy in having meaningful friendships. This book would make a wonderful gift for a friend that you want to thank for being a part of your life. You can read a few stories a night and go to sleep with a smile on your face and a prayer to God for placing these special women in your life.

My friends have made the story of my life.

In a thousand ways they have turned my limitations into beautiful privileges.

Helen Keller

Melissa says

This book was very lovely, all about friendship but it focused too much on religion.

Amber says

I was blessed to read this book as part of the launch team. I loved this book and it came at the most perfect time. A time when I am struggling to form new friendships as a 30 year old. Oftentimes, when people have to form new friendships later in life, it is because they have moved to a new town. In my case, it is the opposite; I have stayed in my town and all my friends have moved away. It is hard making friends as an adult.

I can honestly say every single story in this book touched me in some way. It made me dearly miss my life long friends and long for new friends. It made me realize how much I love and appreciate and value the friends I do have. It made me realize I need to vocalize those feelings to the friends I have, so they never question their place in my life. No matter what stage of friendship you are in, this book is for you. Dawn Camp has done a wonderful job putting these stories together. I laughed, I cried and I longed to hug my girlfriends.

Jen Bradbury says

My favorite comedy is Friends, I think because for years, I longed for the kind of close-knit friendships depicted in the show. Thanks to an amazing small group experience a decade ago, I found those kinds of friends – friends that have been with me through thick and thin, through job changes and moves, and through miscarriages and birth. They've challenged my faith, carried it when it's been nearly gone, and held hope for me when I thought it, too, had all but disappeared.

It's these friends I thought about most as I read *The Gift of Friendship: Stories that Celebrate the Beauty of Shared Moments*, a book of essays edited by Dawn Camp. For the most part, the essays in this book are short, making it easy to read a handful at a time during a few moments in the margins of your day. It's an easily relatable book. In fact, the beauty *The Gift of Friendship* is the way you'll see yourself – and your friendships - in nearly all of it's essays.

I know I did.

When Becky Keife said, "There is no score-keeping when doing life together" in her essay, *When Friendship is More than Favors*, I thought about the time just last week when a friend of mine brought lunch to me. I completely forgot to pay her back and texted her afterward saying so. She replied saying, "I didn't even think about that!" Indeed, as Becky says, "There is community-building by bearing each other's burdens, and sometimes that means being willing to let yourself be the one carried."

As someone who has, for years, struggled with playing (and losing) the comparison game, I found myself nodding my head in agreement with Kristen Strong's insight in *The One Thing Every Good Friend Does* that "It takes security to know that listening to a friend share her victories and blessings doesn't diminish our own choices and abilities."

As someone whose house is consistently a little more dirty and cluttered than I'd like it to be, I was affirmed in my desire to nevertheless have people in my home when Lisa-Jo Baker reminded me in *How to Feel at Home in Your House and Your Skin* that "No matter how much you clean or remodel or move or rebuild,

hospitality will always be more a matter of the heart than the architecture. Your guests will only feel as comfortable in your house as you feel in your own skin.”

When Myquillyn Smith said in *The Power of the Imperfect*, “The imperfections in our homes have the ability to help put people at ease. There's something about walking in a house and being greeted by a kind person who lives beautifully within her imperfect home, without apology, that makes me want to be friends with her and tell her all my secrets” I flashed back to my home growing up and how comfortable it – in all its imperfections – made my friends and I feel.

My favorite essay in *The Gift of Friendship* was Anna Rendell's *On the Kind of Friend I Want My Daughter to Have*. As a new mom, I suspect Anna is right: “If I want my daughter to know how to be a good friend, I need to be the one to show her.”

Books like *The Gift of Friendship* will help show us how, inspiring and reminding us what it means to be a good friend.

Ioana says

The Gift of Friendship was a truly inspiring book for me. I don't always think that about a collection of short anecdotes and personal sharing about a topic, but this was different.

Dawn Camp, the editor of this book, is an (in)courage contributor, and along with other (in)courage contributors and some other well known online figures, she aims to reveal stories about how much one really needs a friend.

The book deals with different topics all having to do with an aspect of friendship. Whether it's about learning the art of hospitality, pursuing friendship intentionally, being vulnerable, going out there and making new friends, or recognizing our very first friends who also happen to be our family, there is something in the book for everyone, no matter the life stage the reader is in. Sure, I didn't relate to every story, but there was something in each section that spoke to me, and made me more mindful of the role I have as a friend, and the responsibility I carry.

Each chapter ends with a quote, or a Bible verse that sums up the chapter. As a lover of quotes, I thought those were such a nice touch at the end of every chapter.

The writers seemed honest and open in their sharing. The entries are not necessarily new, nor recent, some might have been first written for a blog, or another social platform, but they were written thoughtfully. I really liked the short chapter format. It was easy to read, the chapters were concise, and very much to the point, without unnecessary beating around the bush.

As a side note, this book made me a bit more interested in the (in)courage community, and the writers that contribute to the blog daily. I used to follow the blog closely, but over the time I stopped following along. This book made me miss it, and maybe I will make it a habit to read and let myself be encouraged again.

I have been thinking about this whole friends thing lately, and this book came at the right moment. It encouraged me to invest in friends, to be a better friend, to pray for my friends, to listen, to care deeply and genuinely, to help them grow into who they are supposed to be. It's not always easy being a friend, but at the end of the day, it's always worth it. All the pictures and all the memories you collect over years prove just that.

I am grateful I had the possibility to read this. It was a perfect timing kind of book.

I received a free e-book copy of this book via Net Galley. All thoughts expressed here are my own.

Elizabeth says

I just finished this darling little book. It was like sitting down with a cup of hot tea and reminiscing with your oldest friends. Relationships are always full of hill and valleys, and this collection of women and their stories show the tapestry of relationships in an engaging and familiar way. I have hit a strange point in my life where it feels like making new friends is more work than its worth, and this book has really challenged me to look for people I can touch even if we only meet for "a reason in a season." Dawn Camp has created a winning collaboration. I plan to share it with some of my friends (maybe even a new one)!

Alyssa says

Camp now returns with 'The Gift of Friendship', once again gathering the best writers from around the Christian blogosphere to write on "stories that celebrate the beauty of shared moments".

To be forthright, I didn't enjoy it as much as the first book. 'Friendship' still has a comfortable, "Chicken Soup for the Soul" vibe to it and blessedly (for this mom of a newborn) all the entries were short. However, I didn't feel that their stories/words struck me as profound. None of them truly jumped out at me in a 'that's how I feel' kind of way.

Nevertheless, each author's words are touching and beautiful. There is potential for both laughter and tears if this book is put in the right hands. It would make a fantastic gift for a birthday or 'just because'.

"It takes security to know that listening to a friend share her victories and blessings doesn't diminish our own choices and abilities. It takes compassion to know that listening to her share her struggles and losses doesn't elevate our status in the imaginary Woman Who Most Has Her Act Together challenge. It takes a true sister to cheer on another sister in ways that make both women come alive."

--"The One Thing Every Good Friend Does" - Kristen Strong

I received a copy of this book from the publisher via the author's launch team in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

D.J. *Mama Bear's Bookish Den* says

(This review is also posted on Mama Bear Reads at <http://www.mamaandthebears.com>)

I grew up as a military brat. I traveled the world with my family up until I was in high school. I went to 16 different schools, and lived numerous places. I made friends with ease and had quite a bit of social confidence.

Then something happened. What, I am not sure, but that confidence is no longer there.

There is honestly nothing I struggle with more than making friends. I feel incredibly awkward in any social setting, I'd rather stay home and watch Netflix than do a play date, and calling someone on the phone is enough to make my head spin and last night's spaghetti come back up from the dead.

At almost 30 years old, I want friends but it seems to be absolutely impossible to make and keep them.

That's why, I jumped to the chance to help launch this amazing book that was edited by Dawn Camp called, "The Gift of Friendship".

I assumed that it was going to be pretty typical of "friendship" books and be a light and easy read. Although it was easy to read-the content is far from "light".

This book is a compilation of almost 50 stories from various people. Many you may have heard of like: Lysa Terkeurst, Tsh Oxenreider, Holley Gerth, or Jessica Turner.

These stories cover many topics. It goes from the deep like vulnerability and gets into the lighthearted ones about old friends, and gets deep again with stories about purposeful friendship.

The stories are so beautiful and touching. Many of them are so relatable, I could have wrote them myself. There is so much wisdom and encouragement in this book! The stories aren't long at all, so it's really easy to wiz through-but I would recommend taking your time and savoring each bit.

I would guarantee that each time you flip through this stunning book, you would get something completely different out of it each and EVERY time.

To be honest, it really opened my eyes up about all that I miss out on when I build up walls against others. It also showed me that the author I love and adore struggles with the same things I do. That "success" doesn't take away the NEED to have fellowship. We weren't created to walk this world alone. We are the BODY of Christ for a reason.

"The Gift of Friendship" was a true gift for me, and I know it would be an amazing gift to give to ANYONE (not just mamas!!!).

I give this book 5 Stars!

I received this book in exchange for my honest review, and that's what you got!

Becky says

Thank You for Being My Friend

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS REVIEW ON MY BLOG:

<http://bookreadingtic.com/2016/02/26/...>

Do you remember what you did the last time you were with a friend? You can probably recite where you

were, and how you felt about it, even if it was long ago. No doubt that memory will cause you to recall other times you were with a friend, too. Friendships with others are important to us, whether it is with someone you haven't known for long, or with someone that goes back for years. This book explores the kaleidoscope of types of friendships that can exist, and just like fingerprints, no two relationships are alike.

The Gift of Friendship is a compilation of over fifty, true short stories from a variety women sharing their friendships. The editor has divided them into nine different categories, such as "pursuing friendship" to "old friends." Some of these tales will cause you to giggle, some will bring a lump to your throat, but many, if not all, will touch your heart.

We may not recall the great buy we found a couple of years ago, or the way to drive to a particular spot, but the memories we have from the people in our lives--our friendships--will stay with us forever. Friendships are important to us, and how they make us feel, resonate to our very core.

I enjoyed this book, it is easy to read, and many of the stories are easy to identify with. God created us to be in relationships, just as the book of Hebrews reminds us, " And let us not neglect our meeting together..."

Open this book, and enjoy the gift of friendship as experienced by many different people, in a variety of circumstances. After you're done, you might be inspired to reach out to your friend, whether it be via the post office, the telephone, or one of today's many social media options. This 5-star book would be a nice gift to give a friend, or as a gift to give to yourself.

The publisher has provided bookreadingtic with a complimentary copy of *The Gift of Friendship*, through Revell Publishing for the purpose of review. I have not been compensated in any other manner. All opinions expressed are my own, and I was not required, or influenced, to give anything but an honest appraisal. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Carole Jarvis says

Reviewed at The Power of Words: <http://bit.ly/1Wos2mK>

I tend to be an introvert, so this book really spoke to me. Not that I don't have friends, because I do; but I often fail to stay connected with them like I should. In fact, I wasn't very far into this collection before I stopped to phone and write notes to a few of those special people in my life, and was greatly blessed as a result.

The Gift of Friendship is an inspirational collection from several of today's popular writers, edited by Dawn Camp, and also includes beautiful photography by her as well. Included are such topics as Building Community, It Takes a Friend to Be a Friend, Hospitality, Vulnerability, and Making a Difference. I'm familiar with a few ladies who contributed to this collection, and I made new "friends" at the same time. I recommend reading The Gift of Friendship slowly, a chapter at a time, and you'll discover that the experience is similar to surrounding yourself with a group of encouragers.

Rather than trying to describe this book further, let me point out a few things that I found especially touching

...

I have been surprised at how close relationships can be formed online, so I appreciated Dawn's words in the Introduction: "Don't let anyone tell you that a friendship that begins online must lack a foundation. Treasure friendship in whatever form it takes."

Francie Winslow talks about the importance of deepening our relationships in a world of high-tech social media where we are "connected – but rarely known."

I loved the experience Liz Curtis Higgs shared about her friend's friendship bread and starter dough, resulting in this reflection: "Sometimes the best friendships get off to a messy start. Just keep squeezing, add the right ingredients, and let it bake until done. Delicious."

Sarah Forgrave uses the beautiful analogy of a quilt to illustrate the give and take of friendship: "Some of the fabrics were colorful and vibrant, while others faded into the background or had frayed around the edges. The quilt maker took these frayed pieces and stitched them next to a sturdy piece. As each scrap of cloth connected with another, the weak ones became stronger, until the squares were stitched together to form a quilt. A quilt with no evidence of frayed edges. A quilt as beautiful as its most vibrant pattern." My takeaway is that when I'm weak, I need to share with a trusted friend(s), letting others come alongside me and trim off my frayed edges. When I'm strong, God stitches me next to someone else to hold them together.

I especially enjoyed Dawn Camp's personal stories that are scattered throughout this collection. In one chapter, she describes how people reached out to those in need during a southern ice storm, how "tragedy breeds everyday heroes." I could definitely relate to that, as I live in the south! In another chapter, she encouraged me to find a safe place by looking for someone I can trust - and, at the same time, to be a safe place for friends who need to talk. In the last chapter, Dawn talks about mother/daughter closeness, ending with an anonymous quote that perfectly describes the precious relationship my mom and I had: "A mother is your first friend, your best friend, your forever friend."

The Gift of Friendship is a great book for personal reading, but would also make a wonderful gift for a special friend. Highly recommended.

Thank you to Revell for providing a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Ginny says

I enjoyed this collection of blog posts about all kinds of friendships. Most of the short reads make you smile and think about your own friends, how you met, how long you have been friends, and what keeps you friends. At the end of each read is a quote about friendship. Here's one of my favorites: You can trust us to stick to you through thick or thin- to the bitter end. And you can trust us to keep any secrets of yours- closer than you yourself keep it. But you cannot trust us to let you face trouble alone, and go off without a word. Because we are your friends. J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring

Julia says

I read Dawn's words in the introduction of her new book, The Gift of Friendship: Don't let anyone tell you that a friendship that begins online lacks a foundation. Treasure friendship in whatever form it comes. I

wanted to weep.

Instead, my mind kept repeating: Someone understands! while I smiled to myself. It's difficult to explain to people how close you can become to others through having a blog. Though it doesn't happen immediately, I think it may have something to do with sharing our hearts through writing, there is an ease in slowly opening to another soul a distance away. A kind of community you don't expect.

I've experienced this with the older woman I've met through social media and real life friends my age who don't live close. As in right down the street.

This book is a collection of stories about the desire we all for deep relationships and the beauty, often struggle to cultivate them. Because I can't dive into every story that touched me, I'm going to pick out a few that made me think.

Dawn Camp's story, What You Can Do When Life Storms Hit, how God reaches out when you don't want to impose. When my grandma passed in 2014, I ached in a way I still don't understand. A few women through my blog have continued to pray for me, ask me how I am, let me come with all my crazy, and remind me God loves me.

He hears me. Keep bringing Him my heart. It's a quick text or email of encouragement that has held me together, making me grateful I started a blog and for the way God has weaved friendships I never saw coming.

In another story by Ananda Williams, she shares her own struggle with grief.

Sometimes, in the worst times, you need someone to be you, so you can just be.

In the midst of grief, I've watched how God has used two friends in real life, traveling miles to show me joy that comes into the dark. They've let me be quiet, staring off into space. Mad. Weepy.

Through books, music, prayer, food, time and laughter, they've shown up without giving me chance to deny. They've loved me anyway and I'm thankful for the way we give to each other despite the distance.

If you are a mom or a woman who struggles in the friendship area, this book will be a sigh of relief.

If you're a guy, this book will open your eyes to female friendships, but will help you appreciate your own friendships as well.

You will cherish longtime friends and the new ones beginning.

Kristin says

"The Gift of Friendship" is of full stories by different writers that prompted me to reminisce on moments I've shared with my own friends. Community is worth celebrating and that's what this book does beautifully. There are stories of heartache redeemed, surprise friendships, and everyday community that reinforced my belief we really are better together.

Nicole says

This book is just what I needed right now in my season of new beginnings. The Gift of Friendship is a reminder and encouragement of the importance of surrounding and maintaining good friendships. I read this book in ebook format but feel it is most appropriately kept in a physical copy. Filled with short stories or excerpts from Christian women, this book will be your push to connect when you become complacent.

Krista D says

When I first picked up the book "The Gift of Friendship: Stories That Celebrate the Beauty of Shared Moments" (edited by Dawn Camp), I was impressed by the list of contributors (Lisa-Jo Baker, Holley Gerth, Liz Curtis Higgs, Jennifer Dukes Lee, Renee Swope, Lysa Terkeurst and the list goes on) but wondered if it would have more fluff than heart and meat. Yet when I started reading it, I could not put it down.

This book celebrates the beauty of friendships of many types, encourages you to remember the blessing of those friends God has placed in your life (even if only for a season) and gives you courage to reach out to others if in need of a friend or to be that friend someone else needs. Even though each story is from a different woman reflecting on her own friendships and experiences, there is so much in the book that you can relate to and draw parallels to your own life. It helped me to reflect on the friendships that I treasure, those that maybe I need reconnect with, and consider the importance of the small (and large) investments that keep a friendship healthy. Sometimes just a text to encourage or an invitation to coffee is all it takes to bless a friend that has blessed you. The book also celebrates those friendships that are just for a season, recognizing the importance of those God has placed in our path for a season and the impact those connections can make as well, something I don't often reflect on.

I appreciated that each entry in the book is heartfelt yet short, making it a great book to read just a story at a time while sitting in a waiting room or waiting for kids to get done with an activity or for when I had just 5-10 minutes of time that I wanted to fill with positive encouragement instead of scrolling through social media. (Though I ended up reading this book much quicker than that as I was hooked by the stories and needed to finish it to get this post completed).

This book would be a great way to bless a friend (or two or three) in your life as a way to let them know their friendship blesses you. I'm already trying to decide who to pass my copy to :)

* I was given a free copy of the book in exchange for a review. All opinions and words are my own.