

Thoughts About Friendship

Hollis Guill Ryan

February, the month of valentines and declarations of love, has slipped away. The warm feelings of friendship expressed on Valentines remain with me, however. This year Hal and I undertook to give all our friends in our retirement community a valentine like the kind we gave each other in grade school. Judging by the many thanks we have heard, these small gifts of friendship have been happily received and the minimal effort it took for us to add a personal note to each one has been rewarded many times over.

Once upon a time, Valentine's Day was agonizing. I wanted desperately to receive the most valentines in the classroom valentine box ... and I never did. As a young woman, I craved roses and thoughtfully crafted words of love. That seldom happened. And many years, I didn't even have a sweetheart at all, and felt keenly lonely on the designated "Day of Love."

Gradually, however, I grew out of such expectations and grew into appreciation of friendship, whether confirmed in a card or simply experienced through heart connection. Romance has melted away and has been replaced by deep, trusted friendship. My husband Hal and I no longer exchange ornate Hallmark cards. In fact, I keep one valentine on my desk all year round, as a reminder of my love for him, and each year I give it to him. Then I take it back so I can present it to him next year!

Ah, but friendship ... While romance has palled, friendship has brightened. Four years ago, Hal and I moved into a retirement community and deliberately began making new friends. While these friendships are all younger than four years and so do not yet have the depth of our friendships within the Goodenough Community, they are precious. Friends are people we can count on for companionship; people who will turn to us for help and will help us when needed. Friends are people we find interesting and who are interested in us. We care for each other and show our care and concern in differing ways.

Long-time friendships forged within the Goodenough Community display yet another level of friendship: intimacy. Through experiences of collaborating on work projects, learning together in different settings, receiving feedback and giving it, repairing relational rifts, choosing to

I don't understand why Cupid was chosen to represent Valentine's Day. When I think about romance, the last thing on my mind is a short, chubby toddler coming at me with a weapon.



remain friends despite personality clashes ... closeness, connection, trust, and intimacy have grown. Although I cite “long-time” friendships, such intimacy can burgeon in younger friendships, flourishing within the setting of a community dedicated to personal growth through relationship. (It is necessary to note that not all relationships are friendships; even so, such relationships can be full of personal learning.)

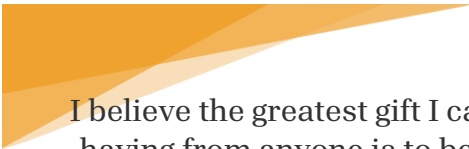
Friendship connections are real and deep and life-giving. When three of my closest, dearest friends died within a year of each other, closely followed by the deaths of others, my soul was rocked. While I still have valued, beloved friends and I do not feel alone, losing even one dear friend was painful; to lose several was crushing. Yet at the very same time I am losing friends to death, I am gaining friends among our new neighbors. All the years I have lived in the Goodenough Community I’ve been studying how to become a worthy friend, and I continue to learn how to make friends. I think of these words from Pema Chodron:

To relate with others compassionately is a challenge. Really communicating from the heart and being there for someone else—our child, spouse, parent, client, patient, or the homeless woman on the street—means not shutting down on that person, which means, first of all, not shutting down on ourselves. This means allowing ourselves to feel what we feel and not pushing it away. It means accepting every aspect of ourselves, even the parts we don’t like. To do this requires openness, which in Buddhism is sometimes called emptiness—not fixating or holding on to anything.

Pema Chodron and other wisdom leaders tell us that I must be a good friend to myself if I want to be a good friend to others. I need to be as interested in myself as I am in others, and I must treat myself with the same respect, trust, acceptance, and forgiveness that I extend to others and expect from others.

Next February, as an expression of friendship, maybe I’ll send a valentine to myself!





I believe the greatest gift I can conceive of having from anyone is to be seen, heard, understood, and touched by them. The greatest gift I can give is to see, hear, understand, and touch another person.

*Virginia Satir
Psychotherapist and author*

Steering Committee: A Year in Review

Laura Sweany

It's hard to believe, but the new circle on the block, the Steering Committee suggested by facilitators Sky and Avi at last year's March Community-building Retreat, will be celebrating its one-year anniversary in March.

This group was formed of equal parts legacy members and active newer members, and our goal was to be a network hub that could give aid as needed to the progress started by the Working Groups we formed in March 2023 (Mission and Vision, Fundraising/Business Development, Healing and Reconciliation, Membership, to name a few), check in with some of the less active existing circles and see if we can support, and try to smooth the pathways to move others' work forward.

We facilitated the organization of the November Community-building Retreat, at which we finalized the new Code of Conduct, and have promoted bringing a new Drug and Alcohol policy to the General Circle for approval. We've helped facilitate a team to organize our upcoming 2024 Summer Gathering, and have offered support for a new Guardian Council that will be a unique way to support individuals in resolving conflicts and harvesting the learnings from those opportunities.

As we all continue to build our capacity to be a self-led community, the Steering Committee can offer support and resources to keep us coming together and moving forward!

Phil Buchmeier, Sue-Marie Casagrande, Shani Fox, Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson, Pam Jarrett-Jefferson, and Laura Sweany are the Steering Committee crew - don't hesitate to reach out to any of us with suggestions, questions, or offers of aid. We're here to help folks come together and get our good works DONE.

Steady Hands in Crazy Weather!

Laura Sweany

Our February work weekend by the Nature Systems group was a typical February escapade - if you don't like the weather right now, then wait 10 minutes. We enjoyed mostly sun on Friday and Saturday, and Tom, Norm, Mike, and Laura (with new friend from Onalaska Women's Social Group, Blossom Rogers, in tow), got busy weeding the terraces and pruning apple trees on the upper campus.



Sunday was cloudy and spitting rain, but we were in good spirits while getting the beds by Potlatch weeded and chipped—the crocus and daffodils kept us company. Elizabeth cooked for us, and by the end of our time all our designated tasks were finished. We each returned home tired but satisfied with our work and our time together.

Every pair of hands gets us closer to reclaiming the lovely gardens and productive spaces that add so much to our joy in Sahale.

Hope to work with YOU soon!

Are you itching to get out of the city and enjoy some time at Sahale?

We invite you to join us for the
March gathering 3/29-31, or
April's ALDERMANIA 4/19-21, and/or
Memorial Weekend for putting up the tent!



Our next Village View – Late March / early April

Our next Village View editors are Hollis Guill Ryan and Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson.

Programs and Events of the Goodenough Community:

Throughout the year we offer programs and events that help you participate in your own development, learn about relating well with others, and help you discover your potential for having a good time in life and with others. As we work through this period of transition, we have limited or changed our offerings, but check this page for the latest information. Information about future programs and events also will be found on our website: www.goodenough.org and in future *Village Views*.



The Goodenough Community's governing body, the General Circle

Currently meets weekly on alternate Monday evenings, 7 PM on Zoom. For additional information, contact [Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson](#)



The Women’s Program is a long-established and ever- growing way for women to enjoy each other’s company, learn about themselves as women, and even perhaps to experience the Divine Feminine. *Please contact Laura Sweany, alwaysgrowingdesign@gmail.com*

The Third Age - Those aged 60 and older customarily gather every other month, Friday evenings, at 7 PM by Zoom. Contact [Kirsten Rohde](#) for more information.



The Men’s Program - Our Men’s Circle is an expression of brotherhood and practice, with wisdom gathered from our own lives, other men’s work, advocates, and the founders of this circle. A men’s service weekend at Sahale is coming up – Date to be announced. For information, contact [Norm Peck](#)



Pathwork, A Program of Convocation: A Church and Ministry. Pathwork offers a spiritual home in which to rest and to share your heart and mind as you move through these unpredictable times.

Participants come together and find support and encouragement, gaining wisdom from the world’s faith and wisdom traditions. All are welcome to join. Meetings are held via Zoom on alternate Sundays: 7 to 9 PM. Our next session: Sunday, March 10.

Are you itching to get out of the city and enjoy some time at Sahale?

We invite you to join us for the
March gathering 3/29-31, or
April's ALDERMANIA 4/19-21, and/or
Memorial Weekend for putting up the tent!

