

Why The Friends You Make In Your 40s Are The Best You'll EVER Make

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By *Lynne Meredith Golodner*



Best friends come when you don't need anything, when you simply want to share space.

When I stopped coaching my youngest son's soccer team after four years, I nestled into a chair on the sidelines and started talking to other parents. That's where I met Rochelle, a woman with cropped white-blond hair and a strong voice that had me laughing after five minutes.

When we went on a double date with husbands in tow, I didn't expect to have so much in common. We carried the same pink purse from Guess; we were both markedly different from our families, marching to our own music; we both have strong personalities and big hearts.

A bottle of wine later and I knew I had found a soul mate.

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One of the things that surprised me as I grew up was that the pettiness of childhood friendships and the follower-instinct of adolescence didn't change. Many peers simply grew into petty, gossiping adults or followers seeking the adult cool-crowd. (Think moms in Lululemons at drop-off every morning huddled in a closed circle, all best [friends](#) and chatting.)

I've never been able to follow the crowd. At times, that's led others to follow me but it's also put me into my own little box. I've been called uncool, weird and different.

But as an adult, I'm finally not alone.

In my 20s, I was desperately looking for [love](#) and in my 30s, I was desperately trying to [keep the wrong marriage](#) but in my 40s, I finally have the confidence and the realization to chuck what doesn't work and cling to what does.

I know a lot of people but I can honestly say I have a select few very close friends. Those are the ones I'll tell anything to, turn to in my insecure moments, rant about my [husband](#), and sit beside when their kid is rushed to the emergency room.

They're the ones I want to travel with and the ones who won't pull any punches. If I'm silly or self-indulgent, they're likely to say so — and I offer the same in return.

I met Jill at a coffee shop for a work meeting. She was a producer at a local TV station and I was looking to book my clients on the air. As we started talking, the professional veneer melted away.

She told me about her baking business and I told her about how my daughter won the local 4th of July baking contest the prior summer. She invited us over to bake with her and her same-age daughter. The girls scampered off to hang out and complain about their old iPhones and fuddy-duddy moms, while we stood in the kitchen gabbing.

She's also a strong personality and a woman who knows what she wants. She doesn't take crap and says what she thinks. I loved her immediately.

Through Jill I met Jaime, a pastor-yoga teacher whom I meet for a monthly lunch. We talk about spirituality, raising kids, marriage, and the similarities of our religions. (With how many friends can you talk about prayer and belief?)

In my 40s, I can't stand to be superficial.

(Well, I never could; I want to say what I feel and believe and be around people who like me for it).

Sometimes, I think about how my life really started at 37, when I summed up the courage to get divorced and started thinking about what kind of life I really want to live.

I pondered whether I was making a difference in the world, since I didn't want to waste any more time doing things, or being around people, that bored me or didn't connect with my soul.

For so long, I'd lived according to other people's definitions: my parents, the religious community, [my ex-husband](#). At 37, I found the courage to live MY life the way it suited me: with intellectual and spiritual integrity.

They say you have friends for a reason, a season or a lifetime. I've learned that the best

friends come when you don't need anything, when you simply want to share space.

I'm so different now than I was in my younger years, so it makes perfect sense that the friends I prefer are rather new.

They're the ones who take me as I am and celebrate my tenacity, my passion, my spiritual focus. They don't try to change me or judge me or play games. They don't care if I swear. They never call me bossy.

One of them, Alisa, started as a client and grew to become one of my closest friends. I usually shy away from that because the blurred focus of the relationship can create a false sense of connection but I truly believe Alisa and I were sisters in another life.

I look at her and feel like it's me looking back.

She's another friend who is comfortable talking about spirituality or sex, she's easy to travel with, and she's open to adventure. Life is short; I don't want to spend mine sitting around.

What I love most about my friends is how true they are. Family are connected to us out of obligation and history, but that doesn't make those [relationships](#) perfect (or healthy).

Friends are the family we choose.

They win trusted seats close to the heart only after proving their integrity and authenticity.

A friend is someone who accepts you in full, without condition, and admires you for all those characteristics that make you who you are — even the ones your mother spent years trying to banish.

You can't make your best friends without knowing your true self. It's just not possible. Everything else is a trial until the real deal shows up.

My father says he was most productive in his 40s. It's a pivotal decade — the last chance to make a real difference before your knees give out and your [boobs](#) start to sag. It's the time of your life to make everything count.

Relationships are mirrors: we choose the people who reflect our values, our ideals, our preferences. At this point in my life, what I see reflecting back at me are strong, confident women with talent, energy and loyalty.

Lynne Golodner spent 37 years trying to not be called "bossy" and "big-mouth." Now, she celebrates those traits with friends who are equally outspoken — and is happier than ever. www.lynnegolodner.com.