

# OUR TRANSITIONAL LIVES

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There was a King.



This King had three wise men. One day he summoned the three wise men. They appeared before the King.

The King said "I have a challenge for you, my wise men. I want you to present me with a gift that when I am happy will make me sad and when I am sad will make me happy!! Until you have this gift for me you will be locked in the dungeon!"

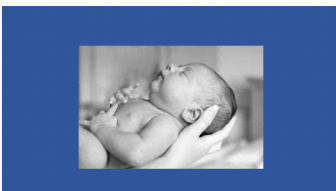
So the three wise men were taken to the dungeon and placed in a cell. Now the three wise men put their heads together and pondered on the King's request. They sent word to the King his present was ready. So they were cleaned up and brought before the King. "Well?" said the King. "Where is my present??" "Your highness," said the spokesman for the wise men. "You said that you wanted us to present you with a gift that when you are happy will make you sad and when you are sad will make you happy!!"

"That is correct!" bellowed the King. The wise men motioned for the page.

The page came forward bearing a ring on his pillow. "A ring?" bellowed the King angrily. "I have many rings, how is this one different???" "Read the inscription, your highness," said the spokesman. The King reached forward, picked up the ring and read the words, "This too shall pass."



Well, today is my birthday! I am double nickel today. Yes, the big one! I am a senior 55! I have transitioned for the 55th time. Our lives are a series of transitions.



Our birth is the first transition. We become a person in human form. Then change begins as we grow from infant to toddler to elementary school, middle school and college. Next our careers, then possibly marriage and a family. Then comes retirement and the final transition – death.

During this period of transitioning, we form relationships with our families and our friends. Sometimes these bonds stay for a little while, sometimes they last a while longer and some even last a lifetime.

As we change, our roles change, from child to our parents to adult child then possibly caregivers. From friend to lover to partner. During these changes, we will experience good times and some not so good times. We will experience happy times with our families and friends. Birthdays, holidays, playing practical jokes on others as well as on us by others. Concerts, parties, pictures and videos...for memories.



There was a teacher who told her class to take a slip of paper home to their parents and to bring money the next day for their class photo. “It will bring you memories of our class later in life,” said the teacher. You will look at it and say, “Look, there is Sally, my best friend, or there’s Burt who sat next to me.” A child’s voice pops up from the class saying, “Look, there’s my teacher who is dead!!!”

During all of the many transitions in our lives we form relationships and bond with other people.



When I went to Marine Corps boot camp, I formed relationships with my platoon mates. We formed squads and four squads formed our platoon. We were a team.

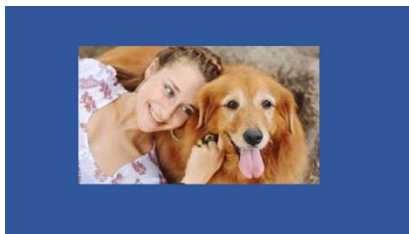


Human bonding is the process of development of a close, interpersonal relationship between two or more people. It most commonly takes place between family members or friends, but can also develop among groups, such as sporting teams and whenever people spend time together.

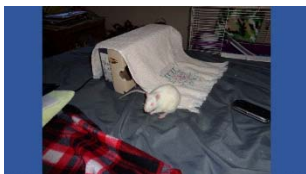
Bonding is a mutual, interactive process, and is different from simple liking. Bonding typically refers to the process of attachment that develops between romantic or platonic partners, close friends, or parents and children or even going to church. This bond is characterized by emotions such as affection and trust. Any two or more people who spend time together may form a bond.



As social beings, the capacity to form and maintain relationships is essential to us and how we function within society. It is a key component to being mentally healthy, and having a positive sense of well-being.



Now our relationships aren't confined to humans. This is probably not for everyone, but we can have very positive relationships with our pets. These relationships can have a positive impact on both our physical and mental health. It has been shown by scientific research that people who have pets and or are in a human relationship live longer than people who do not have these bonds.



As many of you know, Zeus, my pet rat, is my little guy.

As we make transitions in our lives, the bonds we have formed support us in these periods of our lives.



As I was stationed at different duty stations in the military, I formed new friendships as well as when I retired, coming home to my family and friends in Cocoa.

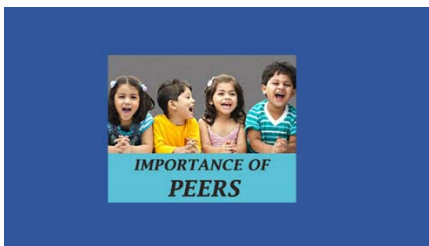


Strong, healthy relationships are important throughout our lives. Our social ties with family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others impact our mental, emotional, and even physical well-being.

Studies have found that having a variety of social relationships may help reduce stress and heart-related risks. Strong social ties are even linked to a longer life. On the other hand, loneliness and social isolation are linked to poorer health, depression, and increased risk of early death.



Every Saturday I go to the movies with my friend Roger. During the day we text each other as a check-in to let each other know what we are up to. Naturally our first ties are typically with family members, but while these may be among our most formative they are not the only relationships we will need over the course of our lives.



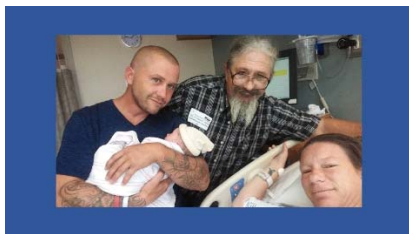
Peer relationships begin to have an influence on our development fairly early in childhood, and the pro-social skills we develop during these years affect many measures of health and well-being in adulthood. Studies across cultural contexts indicate that those who lack strong social networks are more likely to succumb to (and have difficulty recovering from) mental and physical illness.



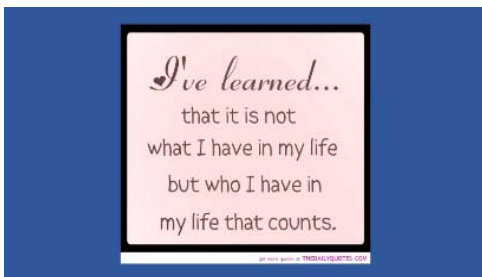
As we age, friends tend to outnumber family in these networks, giving them an ever more important role in keeping us healthy. I keep in touch with friends I went to school with. But besides the benefits to physical, mental and emotional resilience conferred by a solid network of supportive social bonds, friendships serve other important functions. In part, we learn about who



we are and who we hope to become through feedback from others. With some of these others, we will have deep and lasting relationships. With some we'll have more casual relationships. But the importance of what we learn about ourselves from their feedback may have very little to do with the perceived depth of the individual relationship. Even our most casual relationships can influence us in surprisingly profound ways, as some researchers have found, and even in the Internet age it seems that friendships remain very diverse and complex in the lives of most people.



The transitions of our family and friends and those with whom we have bonded affect us as well as our transitions affect them. But the support these bonds give us are unnamable. What would we do or who would we be without these relationships during our lives.



I would encourage each one of you to look deeply at the folks or animals in your life that love and support you and that you love and support. How have you shown or have been shown appreciation for what these bonds mean to you and to them. Then DO IT!!!! Show them what they mean to you. Tell them! Find a way to communicate this meaning to them. Ask them about how much you mean to them??

People need to feel loved, wanted and appreciated. All of us need this in our lives, especially in times of transitions.

True Friendship - Poem by William S. Tsoukalas, Sr.

The feeling of friendship from the start  
Is that special feeling in your heart  
A feeling from deep down inside  
A feeling that no one should hide  
A friend is there through good and bad  
They make you happy when you're sad  
They brighten up your darkest day  
Just by the simple things they say  
Now friendship can't be bought or sold  
It may get tarnished, and may get old  
You can overcome your greatest fear  
Just look around and it is there  
Now friendship's one and only cost  
Is to make sure that it's never lost.  
Amen, Blessed Be.

I close with the poem: *True Friendship* by William S. Tsoukalas Sr.

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