

Friends – Our Family of Choice

If you recognize the impact that our journey can have – that we can be our family of choice and sink or swim together, you begin to appreciate it's power.

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It's not unusual for individuals to 'complain' or have 'challenges' with members of their family! I was told once that it's really because of DNA! Yes, it's the blood line of family members who by DNA are linked to one another like a string of pearls. They are knotted together from one generation to the next in an unbreakable bond.

So, even if you want to 'break away' from a negative, complaining or eccentric relative, the glue still sticks. That's the way it is.

On the other hand, great friends are relationships we choose. They are those individuals who enrich our lives, support us even when we are crazy, unloving and impossible and with whom we can be unconditionally who we are. Realistically, however, they are not the same as knotted pearls. They are more like old pop-out beads. You can add new friends, keep them or pop them out when the relationship wanes.

True friends last, strengthen and grow right along with us, add value to our life's journey.

At one time or another, we've all been blessed when we've had opportunities to meet someone who we knew from the beginning would be a lasting friend. From that first conversation, you felt like you had known this person forever.

These beautiful connections become our family of choice.

As we think of different kinds of relationships, there are other influential arrangements that come to mind. For those of us who have experienced employer/employee relationships, we know how uncertain they can be. One day, your relationship is favorable, satisfying and secure. The next day, you strike out. Sure, it can be great when it's steady and dependable; a nightmare when it ends. Unlike family or friends, in many cases, individuals that are 'connected' because of work often have limited flexibility. If you're the 'boss' you depend on the productivity of others; if you're the worker, you are at the mercy of your supervisor's good will and support. While sometimes satisfying and sometimes not, if you are not the master of your own ship, the director of your own play and the force that drives your success, you are sailing in uncharted waters.

That brings me to the best arrangement of all: Network Marketing! When I think of all the benefits, there isn't any other arrangement that can yield the best of possibilities. You get to *choose* your company, the people with whom you wish to work, a schedule that you create and the degree of your success.

Determined by your own hard work, the team you build really becomes your family of choice – your extended family.

Why, you might ask? Your success is directly related to the group's success. You get to be your team's cheerleader, friend, mentor and coach. You get to work together, plan together, struggle together and celebrate together. What a great arrangement! By treating one another as family, without the complication of DNA, you build rapport, create loyalty and establish a belief that no matter what, 'we're in this together'.

Network marketers understand the true value of relationships. They recognize the results achieved by working well together and treating one

another with respect and trust. It's an arrangement like no other and because of its very nature – your success is a team's success – it's a win-win for all involved.

I wonder what the statistics are regarding the success rate of family members as business partners. Sometimes, it's challenging enough to be 'family'. Add to that dynamic a working relationship and I suspect it takes a real commitment to make the arrangement work.

In network marketing, however, treating members of one's organization as extended family comes as a natural development.

You grow to care about your team, their families, their struggles and their goals. You are driven to their success because you care. Everyone's paycheck is a reflection of the team's success. Business builders who feel they are family will be productive, supportive and reliable. You can work for someone for years and never feel as welcomed or as valued as you are likely to feel by being in someone's network marketing organization!

Life is a journey. It's a journey that's best experienced with individuals with whom you wish to participate. The word 'journey' has the word 'our' within. Think about that: If you recognize the impact that *our* journey can have – that we can be our family of choice and sink or swim together, you begin to appreciate it's power. Choose to journey with people you can believe in and who believe in you. Choose to journey with individuals that treat one another respectfully and who are willing to commit to the success of the whole. While family is family – and always will be – the family of choice is one that will pay off over and over again. Of the millions of possibilities of all the relationships in the world, you chose certain individuals to journey with you because you knew that you could welcome them into your honorary family and they would do the same for you.

What a wonderful way to make a living!

You get to pick the company and the people, treat one another with dignity and belief and your family of choice grows exponentially.

Is there a better way to create a quality of life you deserve? I don't think so. Do you?

Until we meet again,

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Bonnie Ross-Parker, America's Connection Diva, is a multi-dimensional entrepreneur with a background in teaching, franchising, network marketing, direct selling, mentoring and publishing. She has had several articles published, is a Certified Network Marketer and authored two books: *Walk In My Boots - The Joy of Connecting* and *Y.O.U. - Set A High Standard for Being Human*. Passionate about networking, in August, 2002, Bonnie launched her licensed program, "The Joy of Connecting" - an innovative program for women who are serious about growing their business. Women who participate are entrepreneurs, professionals and business owners. There are currently 60 locations for The Joy of Connecting in 12 states. Check it out at: www.TheJOYofConnecting.com Bonnie travels nationwide providing workshops on "Effective Networking for Effective Results" and primarily focuses on women in the profession of direct selling/network marketing.
