



# joy of friendship

In a year full of lockdowns, video meetings, moving across one country to then move across the world, oh and that pesky pandemic, you could say I've had my share of reasons to be distracted. Weirdly enough though, I feel closer to my friends than I have in a long time. Back in April, after my husband and I had just packed up our little car and frantically drove across the United States, we found ourselves in Kansas City in a self-designated 2 week quarantine. Other than chronologically watching all the Marvel movies, we still had way too much time on our hands. So I turned to my support system.

It had been a long while since I had that much time, without distractions, to just authentically catch up with my community. I have this group of girlfriends from uni that I have stayed relatively close to. We all live in separate corners of the US and it's been probably 8 years since we were all in the same place at the same time. But we've managed to stay updated via group messages and a shared blog.

At that point, everyone was working from home, so it was easier to work around schedules and make time for one another. We decided to start a monthly video call - that we've actually kept up - even with me moving back to Australia. We meet on their Friday night/my Saturday morning and just catch up. It seems so simple but it's often the highlight of my week. I'm always blown away by how authentic and real we can be with one another considering we haven't seen each other in years. But isn't that the beauty of good friendships? You can go years without catching up or seeing one another, then act as if no time has gone by at all.

It's been an obviously hard year for so many of us. But one silver lining I continue to fall back on is how strong my relationships are. I feel so grateful to have returned to Perth after having been away for 2 years and fallen back in with friends like I had never left at all. To walk back in to my congregation and be greeted with the same love and welcoming spirit that I had so dearly missed. If anything this pandemic has taught me that staying in contact with people really is easy, today's world makes it so simple to call someone or send a quick message. That I shouldn't let silly excuses get in the way of keeping up with friends and family.

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