

## The social and psychological benefits of same gender friendships

Quotes:

“Women seek each other for emotional support and identity. Together they can create healthy communications and gratifying exchanges of ideas and feelings. Add more women into the mix and an entire emotional support system has emerged.

Psychologically, women gain self-esteem, validation, and happiness from such exchanges. Female friends can boost each other's self-worth through compliments, honest opinions, and suggestions. In times of trouble, females seek one another out to know that their feelings or experiences are normal and healthy. From these interactions, female friends bring away an increased sense of happiness and fulfillment.”

[http://suite101.com/a/women\\_and\\_friendship-a64040](http://suite101.com/a/women_and_friendship-a64040)

“When thinking about the friendship of women, the first notion that comes to mind is the movie *Steel Magnolias*. Although this film was released more than ten years ago, it seems to represent the true nature of how women develop and maintain their relationships with one another. The story revolves around six women whose friendships were tested by love, loyalty and tragedy. It speaks to all women who have experienced the type of friendships that have lasted over the years and have seen both good and bad times. Understanding friendship of women is about understanding how friendships are started, nurtured and maintained for years to come.

Friendships, like any other emotional involvement with another individual, are something that propels the human race forward. It allows us a chance to relieve stress, to have support during hard times and to share with another person the simple pleasures life can bring us. Both men and women harbor friendships, either with their own sex or with the opposite sex. All friendships, therefore, are not the same. In fact, each relationship you have with another individual, whether it is a man or a woman, possesses its own unique characteristics.

Life can make it difficult to maintain friendships. Perhaps you move often and don't have time to solidify new relationships. Or you get married and have **children**, while your other friends are still single. The bottom line is that a friendship requires work by both parties to stay alive. If two friends don't hold up their end of the bargain, the relationship will eventually fizzle out. Although the reasons will vary, friendships of women always ebb and flow with time.”

[http://www.lifescrpt.com/life/relationships/also-in-relationships/the\\_deep\\_bond\\_and\\_friendship\\_of\\_women.aspx](http://www.lifescrpt.com/life/relationships/also-in-relationships/the_deep_bond_and_friendship_of_women.aspx)

“My father died suddenly in July 1991, a week after his 74th birthday. A bartender and tavern owner for most of his adult life, he spent a great deal of time listening patiently to people's stories. He once told me, with more weariness than pride, that he probably heard more confessions than the parish priest. I was too young at the time to

pay much attention to the remark. Only when he died did I begin to appreciate what a gift Dad had with all sorts of people what a good listener he was. For so many years, there had been a great silence between us, a silence I interpreted as disapproval, rejection, lack of love. I didn't realise that he was listening. While I was waiting for him to open up to me, he was waiting for me to share my story with him.

In the months following his death, I discovered that the conflicts and antagonisms I experienced with my father were not unique. Journaling and talking with friends helped clarify dimensions of my grief, and even my dreams seemed to suggest some sort of healing. One dream took me back to the hospital room where my father had died. In the dream, when I fled from the room, overcome with emotion, I distinctly heard the lines from a World War II song that was a favourite of Dad's: "I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar places". Besides these resources of the soul, inviting me to re-examine my past, I turned to books and other writings to help me better understand myself, my father, and my own sons. In doing so, I found myself reflecting upon a little-known archetype the Double that shed much light upon the dynamics among men, the fountain of grief from which all of us drink, and the arena of eros in which every male struggles.

The Double is a psychic pattern of male relatedness that exists in the history of humankind and lies within the soul of every man. (Since archetypes are blueprints of basic human drives and qualities that we all share, this archetype of same-sex love exists in women as well.) It is reflected in a man's eros, that inner drive for connection, for giving and receiving love. I believe that not only are those who call themselves "gay" in search of a Double, but all men need to find the Double within themselves and to express that inner figure in friendships and mentoring.”

<http://www.aislingmagazine.com/aislingmagazine/articles/TAM24/TheDouble.html>

“Aristotle's classical description of friendship is often taken to be the prototype of the bromance. He wrote around 330 BC, "It is those who desire the good of their friends for the friends' sake that are most truly friends, because each loves the other for what he is, and not for any incidental quality." Numerous examples exist of famous intense male friendships throughout most of Western history, and such relationships were likewise common. It has been posited that in the late 19th century, Freudianism and the emergence of visible homosexuality directed heterosexual men to avoid expressions of intense affection.”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bromance>