

OVER THE EDGE

Friends for Life

"A Friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of Nature."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882) US poet & essayist.

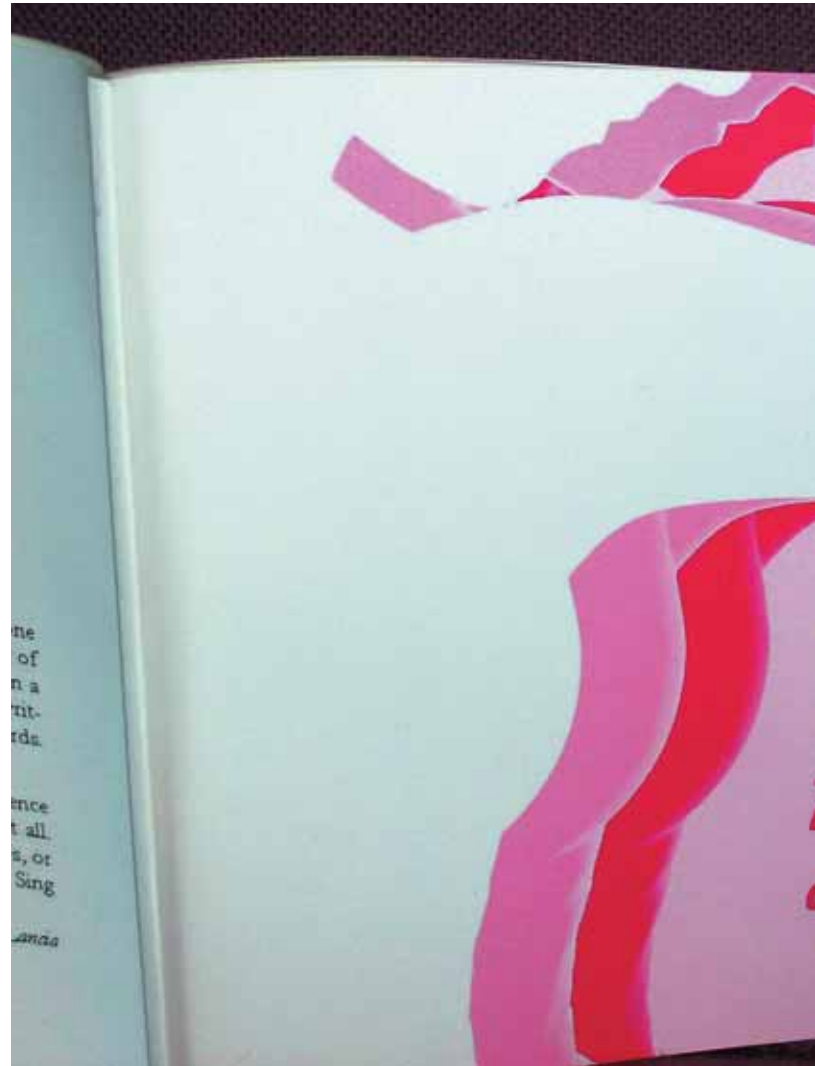
FRIENDS. I NEED MORE CLOSE FRIENDS. I know this sounds silly to some, desperate to others and familiar to more! But, the truth is having a career, a child, a dog, a husband, a house with a lawn and the Jones' living all around us, aging parents, extended family sometimes in need and the occasional unexpected life hiccup. Where does one fit in time for friends? Okay, a step further, if your career requires a great deal of travel or you are a telecommuter living long hours chained to your desk alone in your home office, on conference calls all day long, where do you get your human-touch fix? Starbucks? And then let's progress one more step, you're climbing the corporate ladder of success... and a quote I've heard way to many times and worse, started to believe, "It gets lonely at the top." Hmm, Warren Buffett looks anything but lonely to me! Are we self-imposing this view?

I am always in awe of women who have had long-standing life-long friendships. I do have, what I call, my 911 friends. We've

"A biopsy is a frightening, painful, bruising experience but, somehow, when you sing the "Hokey Pokey" with the poem, the memories of those fears are completely eclipsed."

Dorien Lancia

been friends for years and if any of us is in need of the emotional fire department, we each come running to the other's aid dropping everything without a second thought. Any other



communication is reduced to airport catch up calls. When in flight to or from our destinations we call each other (when there is no available wi-fi and our clients and colleagues have closed for the day if there is such a thing). Our visits are sometimes less than once-a-month because of schedules and life activities. What I long for is time; time with friends doing friend things, eating out, taking ski trips together and being more active with more friends, true friends.... *Over the Edge friends!* Rose is an "Over the Edge" friend. She is an advocate for promoting friendships among women and for sisterhood. She uses her passion and writing to show the powerful emotional effects on people (friends) with words on pages.

Rose Firestone, author, "Keeping Abreast"

Rose Firestone and Dorien Lancia have been friends for better than 20 years. This friendship kicked into high gear when the life of one appeared to be threatened by the torrent onset of breast cancer.



Friends for Life

When I first met Rose before she introduced herself, she introduced her friendship. I found it fascinating that she would place the relationship introduction to Dorien first. I wondered if this loyalty to friends in our culture today is as prevalent as in the past. Has the onslaught of social networks hindered or helped our ability to connect? Rose does not own a computer, however, she has written her first book in support and honor of Dorien, now a breast cancer survivor. She's been writing poetry most of her life the old fashioned way, by pen to paper.

"There is so much power in the written word," Rose says and continues the thought. "It evokes such emotion, creates amazing images, it either builds or de-

stroys, shows love or hate, all by just sitting there, still, upon a single page of paper. That power, is the edge and over for me." When Rose got the 911 call from her best friend who shared the news of her recent breast cancer discovery she broke down emotionally. Rose feared for the potential loss of her best friend, confided her fears to her family (who considered Dorien a family member) and then regrouped her own strength to run to the aid of Dorien.

"I want women to know they can make a difference in a life just by being there to listen and sharing with other women, connecting with each other."
Rose Firestone

911 Friendship

Dorien is grateful to have such friends in her life. "My family and friends are what have helped me. This is not a path to walk alone. My best friends brought me chicken soup after surgery, sent flowers, brought meals and cheer, sent prayer shawls and had their friends across the nation pray for me," notes Dorien. "Through it all, Rose was there, making her signature soup, giving me gift certificates to Victoria's Secret for fancy new bras and writing poems. It is perhaps because we have helped one another through so many difficult times that we easily reach out when things get rough. That's what best friends do," she states emphatically.

Rose is quick to note the desire to help build stronger sisterhood among women. "Our hurried society seems to leave less and less room for meaningful friendship." Rose shares with me over coffee and pumpkin muffins. Personally, I hear over and over from people all over the world that cases of hyper-competition and the onset of social networks potentially hinder one's abilities to connect humanistically one-on-one with meaning, purpose and true desire to support each other. Older women understand this all too well and connect this to their daughters who are forever in search of fitting in and finding true friendships. They hedge past the mean-girls so prominently displayed in instant messaging chat circles, movies, on magazine covers and the news. Rose stresses, "I hope to impact stronger connection with people by using written words to do so. The benefits of authentic long-lasting friendships are just simply infinite!" She sips her water and smiles a big warm knowing smile. This book,



"Keeping Abreast," Left: Dorien Lancia Right: Rose Firestone

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Rose Firestone... *(Continued from page 61)*

is first and foremost a symbol of her support and her love for her friend, Dorien.

Dorien first notes to me the importance of Rose's book dedication to her, "Some poems captured my heart; *"Through the Storm"* helped me see where my strength lies. Some poems took me completely by surprise – *"Boobs"* starts out so funny and light but then the tone changes and it's raw and real. Then there's a final switch in tone and it's personal and it brings a tear. Bottom line, the book took my breath away. I was honored and humbled that my experience could be expressed so completely and with such sensitivity."

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THIS...SISTERHOOD!

"The Healer" starts out, *"He sits on a rounded stool, I sit on a long papered table, he wears a shirt and tie, black slacks and nikes, I wear a paper draped towel open front, to my waste, he looks, he asks, he feels, I look away, I ask I feel..."* When I flipped through Rose's book, this is the first poem I stopped on. The words left me feeling somewhat drained, fearful with a large full lump in both my throat and my chest my face flashing red heat, the thought hit me that there's not

a women on earth who can't feel these words, their meaning, the implications of this significant doctor's visit. I feel both Rose's words and her friendship are so "Over the Edge" meaningful. I long for more authentic, life long, stand-by-me friends and am on a path of my own to search for them. What I know is that I have a lot to give to a friend!

As for Dorien, she is on her own path to recovery. She is cancer free and is grateful for friendships like Rose!

For a copy of *"Keeping Abreast,"* contact rosefirestone@bell-south.net. More impactful than her writing is the quest to bring stronger focus to sisterhood through it. She is "Over the Edge" changing the world by inspiring the strong unbreakable connection of women coming together as friends, as sisters!

As always let me hear from you. Anything you'd love to share concerning any of the "Over the Edge" past stories or ideas on future stories, email me at teresa@cladventures.com subject: Over the Edge. Also, you may visit my blog at www.cladventures.com. See you in March!

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