



**ECHOES BY**  
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

# Do You Know the Meaning of Friendship?

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**I**  
Muhammad Ali was spot-on when he said, "Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain". Because friendship is a personal experience.

Each experience will be different from the other. Each person has their own version of why their friendship lasted to become a diamond, or dissolved like salt in water.

Even though friendship is "so easy to look at, so hard to define" like in Dylan's "Sara", the song he wrote for his first wife, people have been trying to find an answer to the meaning of friendship. It's easier said than done, though.

**II**  
Friendship starts by chance – at any place, at any point of life. Two like-minded people meet. One looks at the other and goes, "What? You too? I thought I was the only one."

Once a friendship kicks off, it's spring time. The friends get to know each other. They share and care, and form a bond of trust, the fabric of a successful friendship.

But then, trust has multiple dimensions. This complicates things. Trust has to be mutual and transparent. It has to be nurtured over time. If broken, it's one of



the two who has to make the first move to mend, and the other has to tango to make ends meet. Trust can be put to the test, though.

Spring only comes once a year. The skies could be cloudy at other times; there could be rains and storms, or even snow. The sun could become so hot that the earth will start to crack. There could be an earthquake, tsunami, or a cyclone. Harsh weather always tests friendship. Harsh weather also unravels hidden faces of friends. These faces could be fantabulous. They could

also be dangerous.

The next element of a good friendship in testing times is respect. If the two friends have grown mutual respect for each other over time, chances are high, they will accept each other in spite of all the limitations of the other.

**III**  
The friendship between the Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger and Keith Richards is unique. The two first met when they were seven, at primary school in Dartford, Kent. They were separated in 1954 when Jagger's

family moved out. They met again on October 17, 1961 at Dartford Railway Station. Jagger was carrying LPs of Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters. Richards told himself, "What? You too?" Thus began one of the longest lasting friendships in musical history.

The two have gone through times when it was evident it's the end of the Rolling Stones. And yet, over time, they survived because they had mutual trust and respect for each other.

Viewing friendships with a little bit of pessimism is good. The reality is, no long-lasting friendship, like Jagger and Richards, has ever been perfect. Arguing and fighting are parts of friendship, just like sharing and caring.

However, if two friends have grown mutual trust and respect for each other, they will forgive and forget and start afresh.

Quoting CS Lewis again, "Friendship, ...has no survival value, rather it is one of those things that give value to survival."

And again, Muhammad Ali said, "If you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything."

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## How Not to Prep for Exams

**NUZHAT HASSAN CHOWDHURY**

*The cityscape is painted golden with sunshine, the weather is divine and your favourite restaurant is calling your name. But you cannot go out and enjoy this beautiful day because you have an exam coming up.*

We've all been there, trying to live life to the fullest but being held back by our academic obligations. Here you go – some pro tips on how *not* to use the limited time you have to prep for your exams.

### **DON'T PROCRASTINATE**

Procrastination is often a result of the fear of failure, which is common among perfectionists.

Remind yourself that you have written countless gruelling exams over the course of your life and ask yourself, if you could overcome all of those, why would this one be any different? Additionally, pretend you're "too cool for school" and actually don't care about grades to trick your brain into forgetting about your crippling fear of failure. No harm in trying, right?

### **DON'T PANIC**

The key is to worry just the right amount, enough to motivate you to be productive but not so much so that it'll terrify and convince you to give up before even trying. You're already offering your educa-

tional institution your (or your parents') hard earned money, don't offer it your sanity too. No need to feed its ego.

### **DON'T OVERTHINK**

Make sure to leave your worries at the study table before calling it a night. Dwelling over the possible outcome of your exams can disrupt your sleep cycle due to the anxiety, negatively impacting the next day's productivity.

Your educational institution has likely given you hair fall, back pain and a quarter-life crisis; don't let it give you sleepless nights as well. Besides, can you imagine letting something live in your mind rent-free? In this economy? Yikes.

### **DON'T BE AFRAID TO VENT**

Avoid bottling up your feelings. Confiding in a confidante about what's bothering you can help put your mind at ease, thereby improving focus.

Turn to a friend who's willing to listen (without imposing, of course). Encourage them to vent about their own struggles



too, and turn the conversation into a therapy session in which neither party offers or receives sound advice (or money) on how to deal with the situation at hand.

This may sound fruitless, but it could provide some much-needed solace during such trying times.

### **DON'T GIVE UP**

If all else fails and you end up not being able to study the entire syllabus within

the deadline, use the weapon of bewilderment. When writing the exam, make up answers that are so bizarre that even the professor starts questioning the legitimacy of their own knowledge.

Write something so profound yet so baffling that your professor has no choice but to spare you some points in recognition of your indestructible will to pass the course.

Most importantly, don't forget to be kind to yourself. Regardless of the outcome of your exam, life will go on. If the outcome is favourable, be proud and pat yourself on the back. If not, I suggest jamming to "Nobody's Perfect" by Hannah Montana, guilt-free.

Good luck!

*Nuzhat enjoys baking but simply cannot find the required ingredients. Tell her about your favourite baked goods at nuzhatchowdhury07@gmail.com*