

My Friends: Grade-by-Grade

1. In kindergarten your idea of a good friend was the person who let you have the red crayon when all that was left was the ugly green one.
2. In first grade your idea of a good friend was the person who went to the bathroom with you and held your hand as you walked through the scary halls.
3. In second grade your idea of a good friend was the person who helped you stand up to the class bully.
4. In third grade your idea of a good friend was the person who shared their lunch with you when you forgot yours on the bus.
5. In fourth grade your idea of a good friend was the person who was willing to switch square dancing partners in gym so you wouldn't have to be stuck do-si-do-ing with Nasty Nicky or Smelly Susan.
6. In fifth grade your idea of a friend was the person who saved a seat on the back of the bus for you.
7. In sixth grade your idea of a friend was the person who went up to Nick or Susan, your new crush, and asked them to dance with you, so that if they said no you wouldn't have to be embarrassed.
8. In seventh grade your idea of a friend was the person who let you copy the social studies homework from the night before that you had.
9. In eighth grade your idea of a good friend was the person who helped you pack up your stuffed animals and old baseball cards so that your room would be a "high schooler's" room, but didn't laugh at you when you finished and broke out into tears.
10. In ninth grade your idea of a good friend was the person who went to that "cool" party thrown by a senior so you wouldn't wind up being the only freshman there.
11. In tenth grade your idea of a good friend was the person who changed their schedule so you would have someone to sit with at lunch.
12. In eleventh grade your idea of a good friend was the person who gave you rides in their new car, convinced your parents that you shouldn't be grounded, consoled you when you broke up with Nick or Susan, and found you a date to the prom.
3. In twelfth grade your idea of a good friend was the person who helped you pick out a college, assured you that you would get into that college, helped you deal with your parents who were having a hard time adjusting to the idea of letting you go...

14. At graduation your idea of a good friend was the person who was crying on the inside but managed the biggest smile one could give as they congratulated you.
15. The summer after twelfth grade your idea of a good friend was the person who helped you clean up the bottles from that party, helped you sneak out of the house when you just couldn't deal with your parents, assured you that now that you and Nick or you and Susan were back together, you could make it through anything, helped you pack up for college and just silently hugged you as you looked through blurry eyes at 18 years of memories you were leaving behind, and finally on those last days of childhood, went out of their way to give you reassurance that you would make it in college as well as you had these past 18 years, and most importantly sent you off to college knowing you were loved.
16. Now, your idea of a good friend is still the person who gives you the better of the two choices, hold your hand when you're scared, helps you fight off those who try to take advantage of you, thinks of you at times when you are not there, reminds you of what you have forgotten, helps you put the past behind you but understands when you need to hold on to it a little longer, stays with you so that you have confidence, goes out of their way to take time for you, helps you clear up your mistakes, helps you deal with pressure from others, smiles for you when they are sad, helps you become a better person, and most importantly loves you!

No matter where we go or who we become, never forget who helped us get there.