

# What is a Friend?



What is a friend? I will tell you. It is a person with whom you dare to be yourself. ☞ Your soul can be naked with him. ☞ He seems to ask of you to put on nothing, only to be what you are. He does not want you to be better or worse. ☞☞☞ When you are with him, you feel as a prisoner feels who has been declared innocent. ☞ You do not have to be on your guard. You can say what you think, so long as it is genuinely you. He understands those contradictions in your nature that lead others to misjudge you. ☞ With him you breathe freely. ☞☞☞ You can avow your little vanities and envies and hates and vicious sparks, your meannesses and absurdities and, in opening them up to him, they are lost, dissolved on the white ocean of his loyalty. ☞☞ He understands. You do not have to be careful. You can abuse him, neglect him, tolerate him. Best of all, you can keep still with him. It makes no matter. He likes you— He is like fire that purges to the bone. ☞ He understands. He understands. ☞☞ You can weep with him, sin with him, laugh with him, pray with him. Through it all — and underneath — he sees, knows and loves you. ☞☞ A friend? What is a friend? Just one, I repeat, with whom you dare to be yourself. ☞

—C. Raymond Beran