



Stress & Relationships

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Q: Dear Susie, I had an argument with a dear friend about how to deal with our teenage daughters. Now she will not speak to me. She just answers when spoken to and shows no desire to mend our longstanding friendship.

A: I certainly understand how such a sad situation would cause you stress, worry, and perhaps even some anger. I think perhaps the question you're really asking is about how to mend a stressed relationship when you genuinely miss the friendship. Let me offer a few suggestions from a more personal perspective.

1. I've found that writing a heartfelt, compassionate, respectful and sincere letter can work wonders in opening doors to see if the relationship can be salvaged. This is not the time to defend our own actions, nor judge the other. It's an opportunity to let the other person know that you miss them and are sad about what happened. If you have anything to apologize for, offer an apology, without demanding one in return.

2. Or...you might try calling to explain that you've missed her. Remind her that longstanding friendships are rare and that life is so short, and tell her you would like to schedule a time that's convenient for her to try to fix what has gone wrong.

If #1 or #2 brings positive results, perhaps propose a deal that your friendship is what comes first here, that you will both avoid child-rearing issues, and in general not judge one another or your families. Sadly, sometimes, no matter how much we want someone else to want to repair a relationship as much as we do, they just don't or are not able to --at least not yet. See if any of the above feel comfortable to you and if so, give it a try. If not, it's true that life really is short. Release your wish to make this work for the time being, and for now share your time with friends who are available and who cherish you. Keep the door open. You never know. It may work itself out over time.

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