

# The Importance of Friendships



**Friendship is an especially important part of living with MS because friendship can bring stability to a life with an unpredictable disease.**

I remember when I was diagnosed 25 years ago, I turned to my most treasured friend, my spouse, but also to friends outside my marriage.

Like Norrey, who is one of my best friends. I met her the first day of college outside my English class in the 70s and she's been there for me ever since. My first impression of her that day in English was that she was shy, but we connected immediately when I spoke up. We balance each other out! She is my peace. She's very stable and adds that stability to my life.

I have another friend named Ellen, and she's the one I can cut up with all the time - having a laugh and fun times. She lives life to the fullest, and that inspires me to keep going.

Friendship is also important within the MS community. When you are diagnosed, no matter who is in the room with you — the doctor, maybe your spouse, even a friend — you're ultimately all alone. This diagnosis is so lonely. That's how I felt, all alone. Even though my husband was across from me, I can't even tell you how alone I felt.

No one wants to feel lonely. I'm a generally very happy person, but when my diagnosis came, I became sad and lonely both mentally and emotionally. I sought new friendships through an MS support group where I live here in Mississippi. We have a common issue: MS. We can talk about it. We can talk about our good days and bad days in ways I can't always with my other

friends.

No matter what age, your friends can get you through good times and bad! Don't be afraid to make a friend because they can be invaluable to not only your physical health, but mental health as well.