

Reflections on friendship

Apollo Wopicho

Apollo sends greetings from Uganda – I love nature with all people and continue trying to work through others to promote climate justice

What importance has friendship had in your life?

Friendship is the relationships built carnally or spiritually for certain purpose either for long or short term depending on the attachment or values involved to determine the strength of orientation defined by both parties involved in the group. Religious Friendship to us Quakers has evolved with long period of orientation from founders creating diverse values core in nature binding all people of different walks into believe of a society across the cultures and groups of all people.

Do you have any friends who are very different from you? What have you learned from them?

Yes I have and actually the majority from different walks of life like education professions, religions like Islam catholic protestant, races and even age groups both old and young. I have learned and shared a lot with people who may look different from me, I have learned that we are the same struggling with life matters of survival although in different geographical and status positions. All people are faced with the same natural threats like death, love, creed, security and struggling for good.

Do you have friends who understand and support your work (or your views) on the climate crisis? Has this made a difference to you?

Yes, my organizations vision is “together for change” [Quaker conservation Education-Uganda] we work closely for the common good of restoring the natural beauty and serenity in our communities, actually without them I would have done so little and still need others to work with in supporting the majority vulnerable people who are not aware of the rapid changes happening around them. They volunteer to move in local communities and schools for sensitization and others raise funds and materials for supporting my work and the impact is great with them through songs, concerts, drama extra

Do you think it is good to be close friends with the people we take climate action with? Why (not)?

Very significant to have close friends to tackle climate issues together because of;

- ❖ Sharing knowledge and experiences, no man is an island of himself.
- ❖ Volunteering to support each other’s activities to strengthen the programs.
- ❖ Tackling emerging problems together to overcome challenges as they come
- ❖ Other Friends may have financial capacity to strengthen your work.

- ❖ Avenues for further studies to capacity building in staffs.

**Do you feel upheld (supported) by your Quaker community in your climate action?
Are there ways we could be better Friends to each other in this way?**

I would be blessed to see Quakers of different walks in Uganda tackling issues of climate justice with us in so many ways.

- ❖ Fundraising to amplify our different activities in climate justice including;
- ❖ Tree planting and nursery bed management
- ❖ Education and sensitization of high school and tertiary students.
- ❖ Education and feeding of less privileged children affected by climate change.
- ❖ Publications and distribution of articles through national papers and printing of enough materials about climate justice into local language and simplified knowledge for local people.
- ❖ Sending volunteers to work and support our Quaker activities.
- ❖ Linking us to scholarships for further studies in the field of climate justice as it is with Woodbook.
- ❖ Connect us to other organizations working with climate justice for sharing and support.
- ❖ To handle water Quality and land management issues and practices improvement to foster smart Agriculture as 70% of our local people are employed in subsistence farming.

Amanda Jones

Quaker from Okehampton, Devon with lifelong climate campaigning

What importance has friendship had in your life?

Friendship has given me a sense of purpose and community. I know I am loved despite being alone and disabled. By connecting with Friends in person and online it gives me the courage to venture out to socialise and openly speak about Quakerism.

My faith and beliefs are acknowledged and held in Worship rising to leadings in my thoughts and writing.

Do you have any friends who are very different from you? What have you learned from them?

I have friends outside of Quakers who are different but I see that as enriching and conversation building. With kindness I can express my views and challenge. I have learned that people can be friends and disagree.

Do you have friends who understand and support your work (or your views) on the climate crisis? Has this made a difference to you?

Most of my friends support my climate crisis views. Knowing that after over 30 years of campaigning and environmental learning my friends believe the same is reassuring and hopeful. Making online connections has brought an accessible way to freely express myself through widely sharing causes and writing, commenting and engaging.

Do you think it is good to be close friends with the people we take climate action with? Why (not)?

Yes, it is very important to find your people. The self love from God within naturally attracts friends who you're meant to be close to. When ideas arise often just a mention of something is enough to seed growth and exploration with them.

Do you feel upheld (supported) by your Quaker community in your climate action? Are there ways we could be better Friends to each other in this way?

I feel upheld by many spaces. During the Climate Justice course accessible Zooms have emerged. One with a general group, one with local Friends, the relaunch of the local climate cafe, Local Development Worker events, WhatsApp groups reflecting this and feeding into The Big One event. Becoming involved with the Quaker Arts Network has opened up interest with my friends in the Loving Earth Project.

Exploring local opportunities and support would enable more action. Our Meeting just hasn't enough Friends able to run an event for example.