



A MOST MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIP

The clock was striking twelve the first time I walked down the path and knocked at the door of the front porch of Stepping Stones.

“You’re right on time,” said the petite, smiling, white-haired woman who opened the door.

“Thanks to Al-Anon,” I replied, because I was so often late before Al-Anon. And that was how I met Lois. It was a very special day, for on that autumn afternoon in 1976 I was interviewed to be editor of *The FORUM*. It also marked the beginning of one of the most meaningful friendships of my life.

In trying to describe all that Lois meant to me, the most appropriate thing is to *keep it simple*, because there was no pretense, sentimentality, or excess verbiage with Lois. With her clear blue eyes she would look straight at you and—one-to-one, in a small group, or at an Al-Anon board meeting—she would sum up the discussion on a brief phrase, quietly pose a question that could point to a solution, or prick a balloon of nonsense with a simple statement of fact.

Her unclouded view of reality set the tone for the program and the literature of Al-Anon. It also marked her approach to people and life. Lois was able to see people as they are and accept them. In that non-judgmental acceptance she brought out the best in all whom she met. Her loving attitude shone from her like an invisible force and attracted everyone, even those not in the program. Children and young people especially could relate to her youthfulness of spirit.

On a vacation I shared with her on Cape Cod, although she was 88 years old, she was game to take advantage of the sailing lessons on a sunfish that the inn offered and was annoyed that the boating instructor felt she was too frail to attempt it. That sense of adventure and fun was always a part of Lois. She was ready any time to travel anywhere and was eager to see new sights, around the world close to home.

Lois had encountered and learned to overcome the same problems all family members and friends of alcoholics meet. She turned those difficulties into the life-giving program of Al-Anon.

Lois leaves to each one of us the challenge to live the program and carry the message to help others. She reminds us, however “First we must help ourselves, for we cannot give away that which we do not have.” So, the best tribute to Lois is to follow her example of honesty, simplicity, humility, and a loving, vibrant approach to life.

Hildegard V., Past *Forum* Editor

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