

January 4, 2009

Dear Reader:

As many of you know by now I am a fan of Country music, and one song in particular has been running through my mind in a continuous loop. Written and sung by Tracy Lawrence from his album *For the Love* it is the story of a man who because of bad times is forced to find out who his "real" friends are.

We have all fallen on bad times once or more in our life because of circumstances:

- Death of a loved one,
- Divorce,
- Financial problems,
- Legal problems,
- Etc.

When this happens one truly does find out who your "real" friends are. There are those that inquire,

- Are you all right?
- How can I help?
- What can I do?
- Do you need anything?

They really just want you to say everything is all right because they aren't really prepared to do anything to help.

Then there are those who are actually glad to see you experiencing problems because of some feeling of inadequacy or inferiority on their part.

The "real" friends don't ask what they can do; they just start doing whatever they believe needs to be done. The "real" friends don't ask

- How far is it?
- What time of the night is it?
- How much will this cost?
- Can't it wait?
- etc.

I can count on one hand the number of times I've been called on to be a "real" friend and each time when it was over I felt like what I had done, had been more rewarding to me than it had been to the person I was there for, but it was something that they never forgot, they would talk about it 30 years later. As the song says:

Your gonna' drop everything. Run out and crank up your car. Hit the gas, get there fast. Never stop to think 'what's in it for me?' or 'it's way too far'. You'll just show on up with your big old heart.

The call came at 3:30 am one cold, dreary day. I had received calls like this from Jeannie before, but this seemed right off the bat like it was going to be very different. Jeannie was well educated, from a middle class family, petite, cute and engaging, but she had fallen in with the "wrong people." This time she was in Las Vegas in jail and needed someone to provide her with bail money, she was broke, addicted to drugs and about to be an unwed mother. I could have just hung up, after all the other times many would have, I could have wired money, and I had in the past. But this time was different. She needed saving, not just money. So I cancelled all my other obligations and jumped in my Pontiac Trans Am Firebird and drove from Chicago to Las Vegas stopping only for gas, food and drink. I got her out of jail, and back to her family and into a rehab program all within a seven day period. It was just something I knew had to be done, she never asked for all of that. Still, today, she claims I saved her life, but I just did what a "real" friend knew needed to be done.

Count yourself one of the lucky few if you can identify just one or two "real" friends and consider yourself rich if you can count on even more.

Found Out Who Your Friends Are

Run your car off the side of the road
Get stuck in a ditch way out in the middle of nowhere
Or get yourself in a bind, lose the shirt off your back
Need a floor, need a couch, need a bus fare

This is where the rubber meets the road
This is where the cream is gonna' rise
This is what you really didn't know
This is where the truth don't lie

You find out who your friends are
Somebody's gonna' drop everything
Run out and crank up their car
Hit the gas, get there fast
Never stop to think 'what's in it for me?' or 'it's way too far'
They just show on up with their big old heart
You find out who your friends are

Everybody wants to slap your back

wants to shake your hand
when you're up on top of that mountain
But let one of those rocks give way, then you slide back down, look up
and see who's around then

This ain't where the road comes to an end
This ain't where the bandwagon stops
This is just one of those times when
A lot of folks jump off.

When the water's high
When the weather's not so fair
When the well runs dry
Who's gonna' be there?

You find out who your friends are
You find out who your friends are

Run your car off the side of the road
Get stuck in a ditch way out in the middle of nowhere
Or get yourself in a bind lose the shirt off your back
Need a floor, need a couch, need a bus fare

Man, I've been there

Are you prepared to be a real friend?

If you would like to add a friend, co-worker or family member to my monthly newsletter mailing list please send me their e-mail address.

Talk with you next month.

Duane