



# Friendkeeping: A Field Guide to the People You Love, Hate, and Can't Live Without

*Julie Klam*

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**Friendkeeping: A Field Guide to the People You Love, Hate, and Can't Live Without** Julie Klam  
From the beloved and bestselling memoirist comes a funny and affecting look at making the most of our friendships in an age of isolation.

With her inimitable wit and disarming warmth, Julie Klam shares with us her experiences, advice, and insight in *Friendkeeping*, a candid, hilarious look at some of the most meaningful and enjoyable relationships in our lives: our friendships.

After her bestselling *You Had Me at Woof*, about relationships with dogs, Klam now turns her attention to human relationships to great effect. She examines everything—from the curious world of online friendship to the intersection of friendship and motherhood. She even explores how to hang on to our friendships in the toughest circumstances: when schadenfreude rears its ugly head or when we don't like our friend's mate.

Klam relays a mix of brand-new and time-tested wisdom—she finds that longtime friends really can grow up without growing apart; that communication is key; that friendship is one of life's great, free sources of happiness; that you're not a friend, just a doormat, if you don't get back what you give—and her discoveries range from amusing to deeply important.

Charming, bracingly honest, and compulsively readable, *Friendkeeping* is an irresistible book, a treat that you'll want to share with your best friends right away. Brimming with keen observations and laugh-out-loud moments, it's delivered in the lively, accessible voice that Julie Klam's readers have come to know and love.

## Friendkeeping: A Field Guide to the People You Love, Hate, and Can't Live Without Details

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# From Reader Review Friendkeeping: A Field Guide to the People You Love, Hate, and Can't Live Without for online ebook

## Rachel Hall says

"You come into this world alone and you die alone, but there's a really long stretch in the middle that can be extraordinarily meaningful and even fun with the right people. And when it's not fun, they'll be with you, too." Friendships <3

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## Stefanie says

This was a fairly light read, which is about all I can manage at this particular moment in my life, but I can't say that I was impressed. The author's tongue in cheek sarcasm and efforts to poke fun at herself fell flat, and instead of making me laugh, I closed the book feeling like she was rather shallow and perhaps a little neurotic. She goes from one vignette to another, when what I'd have preferred was a deeper exploration of friendship. I didn't really feel like I knew anything about anyone in the book when it was finally over. All of that said, it did prod me to think a lot about my own friends ... the ones I met when I was 6 years old, the ones I've lost touch with and miss, the ones I've mistreated and been mistreated by, the ones who are currently in my daily life, helping to hold me up during the hard parts and to share my happiness during the joyful parts. Thanks, to all of my friends!

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## Ciara says

i don't know. it was okay? a lot of the less positive review on goodreads say that it was fluffy & lacked substance. can't say i disagree! i was kind of relieved by that, because i have so little time or brainpower for reading thick, heavy books these days (i've been working on andrew solomon's "far from the tree" for literally months). so it was kind of pleasant to just tear through a book in a few hours, like i used to before i had a baby. but i just read it a couple of days ago & i already don't really remember anything about it. save for the fact that the "jancee" that is referenced so often is the author of another "humorous slice of life" book i read that i wasn't really so into, & "patty" is patricia marx, who writes the worst articles for "the new yorker". they're so bad, jared & i have been known to create spoofs of them for each other's amusement. (because somehow we're the kind of people who satirize "new yorker" articles for fun...who am i?)

good for the author for having nice friends, i guess? but i can't say i necessarily learned anything from this book, which kind of cancels out the whole "field guide" aspect. it's really just stories about her & her friends, mixed with occasional advice that would be pretty difficult for anyone other than a relatively wealthy new yorker to take. like, in addressing long-distance friendships, she writes about the importance of sinking the time & money into spending time together at least once a year. but sometimes you are a broke couple with a baby & you can only really afford one out-of-state trip per year & the randparents expect it to be to where they live for christmas. which means you don't get to visit your best friend in detroit. or your partner's best friend in philly. even though you'd really like to. & you live in kansas, so forget anyone ever coming to visit you.

but i guess maybe this book motivated me a little to make more effort with my friends. we'll see if it takes.

arguably my favorite thing about this book is that another reviewer here on goodreads gave it a "1.8". that's so hilariously specific. but inquiring minds want to know...is it more of a 1.82 or are we talking 1.89?

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### **Ellen says**

I received this book in a Goodreads First-Reads giveaway. Thanks so much...I enjoyed the book! Julie Klam has a great sense of humour; it was fun, and easy to read. There were lots of great observations and insights about female friendships that I think most women can relate to, but I think I was looking for more. What about the loss of a friend? How to cope? When a friend ends your friendship with no explanation, how do you deal with that? How do women cope with the death of a life-long friend? And the book only talks about younger friendships; how do friendships change as women mature into retirement years? There was so much more that I was looking for, but I enjoyed what there was. I think most women will enjoy it too!

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### **Stacy says**

In a nutshell what I learned from Friendkeeping: A Field Guide to the People You Love, Hate, and Can't Live Without by Julie Klam is something I already know - I sort of suck at being friends with people; it's so much work. Seriously though, I don't know if there was really anything in here that wasn't obvious and it's really more of the author relating stories about her own friendships. It did force me think a bit more about the friends I do have and how to work them into my life.

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### **Erin says**

It's not really an advice book as I was hoping. It's more of a collection author's personal relationships with her friends. Some of the stories are repeated, which I thought was a bit odd for such a small book. Overall, as a woman, I can still relate and gather advice through her personal anecdotes. It definitely made me reflect on a few of my friendships, and made me feel better about one in particular that has really changed. The book made me realize that it's often no one's "fault" when friendship dynamics change...it's just that miles, busy jobs, and being in different "places" in your lives can sometimes take a toll. It doesn't mean that the friendship is over though..it's just on a break.

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### **Jaclyn Day says**

I've yet to find a book that really gets its hands around the complexity of adult friendship, but Friendkeeping is a valiant effort. (It's still better than the frustrating MWF Seeking BFF.) Klam goes the anecdotal route, discussing various aspects of friendship in a funny, memoir-ish way that doesn't tie things up neatly into a bon mot, self-help tone at the end of each chapter. That's fine—but the book seems to be marketed differently. The tagline for example: A Field Guide to the People You Love, Hate, and Can't Live Without. This really isn't a field guide to anything except Klam's personal friendship history.

While not a great book, it was still an entertaining way to pass the time and some chapters were better than others. The section on online friendships was good and the latter chapters of the book—which deal with

long-distance friendships—were especially poignant for me. (My best friend lives in Dubai.)

One thing Klam does right is talk about how proximity is the best ingredient for maintaining an adult friendship. Without physical proximity, the lines of communication become less intimate and more intermittent. That's why adults so often have the coworker friend or the gym friend or the book club friend or even the blog-turned-real-life friend. When you're young, friendship is as simple as having a desk next to someone else in class, living a few houses down from a girl or boy your age or, later, getting close to your college roommate. Post-college friendships require more maintenance than any you've had before, but the irony is that there are more demands on your time than ever before too. Proximity helps that. Klam does a great job of explaining how hard it can be for her to maintain friendships when they're not easily accessible for her. I think that's something most people can relate to.

If you're stuck in a book rut, this is a good little palette cleanser. It's not too long and it's light-hearted (and occasionally funny).

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### **Shalyn says**

When I bought this book at the airport gift shop so I'd have something to read on the plane for a few hours, I thought it would be more of a discussion on the psychology of human relationships -- not necessarily a scholarly discussion, but at least something that would rise to the level of pop-psychology or something that could have been published in *Psychology Today* magazine at least. It wasn't. The author rambles on for 200+ pages about her friends, how great they are, how they haven't always agreed on things but are still friends, blah, blah, blah. It's good that the author has some friends. Not only are friends good for our mental health in general, but this particular author, being one of those Manhattanites that finds a trip to Brooklyn as arduous and time consuming as, say, a trip to Utah by wagon train, seems like the kind of person with whom it might be very difficult to maintain a relationship over time. I've given it two stars instead of one because, although the book says nothing interesting, it is at least humorous now and then.

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### **Michele Harrod says**

This is a very cute read. I have enjoyed it - Julie Klam has a razor sharp wit, and a self-honesty I found very refreshing. I'd thoroughly enjoy being her friend, because she has enough of them that I wouldn't fear being overly needed. I don't cope well with being needed. I love her confession that she is at the lousy end of the "keeping in touch" scales, famed for making dinner dates, and then cancelling them. And when people move out of town, she considers that a form of abandonment and betrayal (though let's not forget we all have the odd friend that we thank God in heaven for the invention of time and distance). In complete contrast to me, she is a lover of the long 'girl-friend' phone calls - and I almost regret my aversion to the plastic contraption known as the 'telephone'. I'm more of a 'facetime' person, or Facebook if our calendars and physical locations can't allow for the real thing. But she made me reminiscent of the joy of long friend-love letters of the past, of the great secrets we would share with our closest confidantes, the depth of feeling we would pour onto paper - before technology allowed us to settle for just 'snippets' every few minutes of the day.

And I found myself recalling with joy the endless long hours of catching up I once did with girlfriends, solving the world's problems - and our own - over gallons of wine or cocktails. Before life got too busy and stupid things like work got in the way. (And our livers began to reject such determined problem solving

methods, and now insist we limit them to once or twice a year).

But most importantly, she reminded me that friendships are things we must work at, and that friends are a treasured gift we must nurture. That without them, all the other stuff is just not quite the same. Without friends to share the highs and the lows, life would be a rather dull ride. I closed the last page feeling inadequate and deeply ashamed at the lack of time I spend at this most vital task. What perfect timing to read such a book. At a time when New Year's resolutions need to be made, this has certainly shown me one that I absolutely must dedicate more time and attention to.

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## **Amy says**

Julie Klam and I have a lot in common. We seem to have quite similar thoughts about work, writing, social networking and friendships. We both dislike using acronyms on the Internet. She's the successful older sister I've never had. I'd like to write memoirs. She's published three. Unlike Julie Klam, I've met VERY few of my twitter friends in real life. I've suggested meeting for coffee or a drink but most people don't want to meet. Julie now has very close friends and colleagues in writers Ann Leary and Laura Zigman who she met through Twitter. They do a radio show on NPR called "Hash Hags" together where they interview authors. That's a Twitter networking success story!

If you're expecting a field guide as described on the cover of Friendkeeping, you'll be quickly disappointed. Most of the time she comes across as rather narcissistic and selfish, but it's her memoir and she writes as she remembers it. And she's got the friends and maybe you don't and are reading to find out how to keep them. This isn't a how-to book. Klam instead tells stories of her own friendships—the long-term ones, the on-off ones, the ones met through twitter.

Friendkeeping according to Julie Klam:

On timing:

"It does help to be in the same place in life as someone you are friends with; you can be supportive to a pregnant woman when you don't have to look back forty years to your own pregnancy, and maybe the same principle applies. If you're both working at the same place or you're both single or both newly married or you both let four dogs sleep in your bed."

On being yourself:

"I suddenly realized that I hadn't been lobotomized—the person I was before I became a mother was in there. I had interests, or at the very least I was interested in people who had interests other than children."

From @friends to IRL:

"For me, it's brought new like-minded friends into my fray and reconnected me with old friends I am sure I never would have found otherwise. And once we meet online, we are free to move things into the three-dimensional world."

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## David says

potentially interesting subject but a boring book. "one of the funniest writers I know" per the Dayton Daily News blurb, but I guess my taste differs. I didn't dislike her, and I could tell there were phrases or sentences meant in a lighthearted or facetious manner, but I can't say that I laughed even once.

As to the "field guide" part, it's modest. Some people are good at keeping up with long-distance friends, and some are not. The author's mom was closest to her sibs, but the author is not close to her sibs and instead is close to her many friends. Sometimes it's good to be candid with your friends if something is bugging you, but other times it's not and you just swallow it. Some friends like to talk on the phone, but the author prefers Facebook and texting. And so on X every possible topic (friend jealousy, staying friends after one of you has a kid, friendship at different ages.....). She sounds as though she is good about making time for her friends, but she doesn't really have anything fresh or incisive to say about it.

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## Carley says

\*I won this in a Goodreads First Reads Contest\*

There are all types of friends; childhood friends, school yard friends, friends that you've had forever, the friends that got away and the friends that drain every last ounce of life from you. Julie Klam covers it all. This is a step by step guide how to navigate, keep and let go of the people that come into your life forever, for a season and/or for a moment.

Using first hand accounts, life stories and hilarious analogies such as the remora's, *Friendkeeping: A Field Guide to the People You Love, Hate, and Can't Live Without* is a must have. Klam delivers her point of view without sounding preachy, but instead like giving advice as a *friend* would. Even if you are secure in all your relationships, you are guaranteed to read this and say "Ah, I had a friend like that."

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## Josephine says

I always feel bad when I have to review a book I don't have much good to say about... Although the tone is humorous, I didn't enjoy it. The front cover advertise the book as being "A field guide to the people you love, hate, and can't live without". In fact, it is filled with shallow generalizations on friendship and anecdotal examples from the author's personal life. Maybe my expectations were too high but I found "Friendkeeping" to be a really boring read. I won this galley through FirstReads Giveaway so please take note that this review is based on an uncorrected proof.

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## Rekha says

I so thought this book would be right up my alley, because it touches on so many things that I spend a lot of time thinking about, caring about, trying to be better at: maintaining friendships as a central core of one's



life, how to be a good friend, blah blah. Plus, it's a humor book, and me and humor? ARE LIKE THIS. But ultimately it was too meandering for me. Like, she has a chapter about maintaining friendships when you're in a different life stage than your pals (they have babies and you don't, for example). And she just sort of says: hey, do your best with that, sometimes it works out and sometimes it doesn't, which I guess is the truth, but I was looking for a bit more, just in terms of reader satisfaction. So: a solid OK.

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### **Melissa Klug says**

I'm not a dog person, at all, yet I have read two dog books by Julie Klam because I love her humorous writing style so, so much. Now she has a book on friends--wait! I have friends! I love friends! I can read a Julie Klam book and relate to it! This book made me think about all of my own friendships, the new ones and the old ones, the ones forged by real life connections or online connections, and reminded me to be grateful for them. Love!

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