

Friendship,

You Never Know Until You Give It A go!

By Aoife



Friendship is like a butterfly, so unique, so free, so beautiful, so colourful and fragile if you chase it, it will avoid you, but if you take your time and it earns your trust, it will come and softly sit on your shoulder. Friendship may look like that very unassuming caterpillar creeping through the earth, but give it time, nourishment and the right amount of sunshine, see it grow into something so special it takes your breath away.

Now, I would like to tell you a story of a special friendship.

I'm still laughing, I have just had a phone call with my friend Cate, oh my goodness, she can be so funny, sometimes we laugh so much we both fall over. Whether she is telling me about her day or just talking to me, her contagious laugh just makes my day.

So now, let me tell you a bit more about my friend Cate. Cate can do everything anyone else at school can do. She can draw, paint, run, dance and act but

learning takes a bit longer. She tries her very best and makes me beautiful handmade cards all of the time.

Cate is a typical teenager she loves to chat on the phone and keeps me on top of all my work! She emails me my day plans and the assignments for that day, not once, not twice but many times, maybe 53 times just for good measure! After nippers/dippers on Sunday mornings we sometimes go and enjoy an ice cream together, in between dancing and talking Cate always finishes her ice-cream first and then starts eating mine!



Cate likes to be independent and I try to encourage that even though I would like to help her, I know it is good for her to try new things, so that she can be well prepared for her future adventures. Cate encourages me to do my best and I do the same for her, “come on my partner!, you can do it!”

We are best friends exploring life and all its experiences together. We laugh together, we explore together, we imagine together and plan together. When we finish school we have plans to explore Africa together as this is where Cate’s mum was born and we both have a love of animals, nature and adventure.



My friendship with Cate has been a blessing to me, she has Down syndrome, but Down syndrome is just about who she is and not what she is. It makes her unique, it is just like having red hair or freckles or having blue eyes or brown. What's really important is the friendship we have and I think it's what all good friendships should have. Someone that makes you feel good and makes you smile. Someone that has your back. Someone that is there for you in good times and bad, someone that you trust, someone that understands you and treats you with kindness and respect. We learn from each other, we support each other and we celebrate each other. We are friends that share stories of sadness and celebration, we are on a journey together making connections and memories that will last a lifetime. I am so grateful for the time we share together and are looking forward to more adventures in the future.



People should talk openly about people's differences and we can educate each other on choosing acceptance and inclusion and it will make a difference to everyone's life including your own. I am a firm believer that if you make life about others and get rid of the me, me, me attitude, you will gain so much in life in return.

A lot of people don't get it, but we will continue to have fun and laugh together and they are the ones missing out, they don't know about Cates superpowers! I am hoping I can play a small part in lessening the divide. I believe everyone should strive to do their best, be their best and if people put you down, prove them wrong. Be the best human being that you can be, be proud of who you are and you will never have any regrets in life.

