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Never Dump the Whole Load of Hay?

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One cold winter morning the young pastor of a small midwestern church faced his greatest fear. After hours of sermon preparation only one farmer showed up for church. Discouraged, he asked the strong armed man if he should preach or go home.

"Well, I'll tell you what," the farmer said, "If I load my pickup with hay and drive out to feed the cows and only one cow shows up, I feed it."

Believing God has spoken through the farmer, the preacher waxed eloquent for 90 minutes. Convinced he had just delivered the greatest sermon of his short career he asked the farmer, "What did you think of that?"

"Well, I'll tell you what," the farmer said, "If I drive my loaded pickup out to feed the cows and only one cow shows up, I feed it. But I don't dump the whole load of hay on it."

Vulnerability is a Process

That story illustrates the process of personal vulnerability. Nothing bonds people like transparency. But it's never a good idea to dump the whole load of hay the first time you talk with someone. Instead, share a handful of hay and then allow them to respond. Friendships take time and they grow best when people get past their fear of rejection and allow others to see who they are behind the mask.

Jesus modeled this for us. He prayed with His disciples, walked with them, ate with them, resolved their arguments, and ***cried with them.*** Why? So they could see His heart.

Two Sides of The Coin

We all want acceptance and respect. It’s one thing to talk openly with a friend, but we don’t want our secrets posted on Facebook. There are two sides to this coin. On one side, we want our secret guarded. On the other side, we want to guard our friend's secret.

Few things demonstrate a growing friendship like transparency. As I mentioned above, when you share parts of yourself, your friends will tell you things you could use to hurt them, if you told others. Chances are, they’ll wait to see how you handle what they’ve told you before they tell you more.

If you want to build deep friendships you'll need to overcome your fear of rejection. To do this share something personal and see how it's received. If they maintain your confidence and tell you something about themselves, then take another step. But remember, don't dump the whole load of hay.