

*a friendship as good as a shower*

You know how it feels when you have to take a shower and you hesitate, procrastinate and look for reasons to avoid getting in there? Ten seconds later, when you're standing there with that warm, soothing hot water splashing down, you swear that you will stay there until every last drop of hot water is used up and you are forced to get out of the shower and on with your life?

I suppose we have many ventures in our lives that are like that. We get busy doing other things while that little voice in the back of our head constantly reminds us of the task that we know we are avoiding. And like the shower, it doesn't have to be a negative thing, either. You know you need to pick up the phone and call that friend back home. You always feel great after a conversation with this friend, yet for the past week you've been keeping yourself busy and ending each day with that most dreaded of all excuses, "Oh, I should have more time to call him tomorrow".

I'm just not a phone guy I guess. But Bobby is that shower in my life.

We worked together so long ago I'd need a calculator to figure it out. We spent hours laughing and sharing our life battles. To this day, I still count the times sitting back listening to Bobby tell his stories as some of the most pleasurable times in my life. And Bobby had some stories to tell.

He's an East Coast guy. Grew up in Philly and really had that Philly attitude thing going. He had been on his own since he was 14 and to say that Bobby was street smart was an understatement to be sure. Bobby was a survivor who could read through any game you threw at him. We worked with troubled kids and Bobby was a master at shedding the layers of lies and games with kids and getting right to their heart of matters. If you play games with Bobby, you will always lose.

That was a long time ago and since then, Bobby and I have gone in many different directions. We've been married and divorced. We've had children that we've raised and watched leave the nest. We've had enough zip codes to keep the postal service – and many relatives – busy trying to keep up with us.

But the one constant that has never changed is the phone call each year that officially starts the holiday season. Just after Thanksgiving, I always get a call from Bobby. Like that wonderful hot shower, the call from Bobby is always too short and becomes one of the real treasures of my holiday season.

I always promise to call Bobby more and not simply wait to hear from him after Thanksgiving, but he never lets me get lathered up about not calling more often. Our friendship is much deeper than the conversations. He's always 'just checking in before the holidays'. We cover our families and simple life issues, but nothing really important. He is one of the few men I can end a conversation with by saying I love you without it feeling awkward. I just love that guy, and that speaks volumes of where the friendship is.

I can't imagine anyone going through this crazy thing we call life without a friend like Bobby. He truly is like a hot, steamy shower on a bitter cold February morning. The only difference is that eventually you will run out of hot water and have to move on. Bobby will always be there whether we call or not.

Just A Thought