



My Fake Friends **05. Jul, 2010** **by Allison Nazarian**

Over the past few days, I have been privileged to experience what happens when some amazing human beings come together to help and support and love one of their own.

(Note: If you haven't heard the latest about Gracie and EPW, read [this](#) first.)

I have seen people like Carla, Ken, Sarah, Alison and Ori spring into action in a way that awes me, makes me cry every 32.6 seconds and does me proud.
Not surprising, or even unexpected — but very, very ironic.

Why ironic?

Because, you see, these are my “fake” friends.

These are the ones I met in that fake world of cyberspace and social media (twitter, specifically).

The ones who I don't see face-to-face with any regularity, the ones I would never run into at Publix, the ones I can't meet at Starbucks with five minutes' warning, the ones who live Lord-knows-where-but-definitely-not-where-I-live.

These are the “fake” friends that I get questioned about – lots – in my “real” life.

“Why do you spend so much time talking to/texting with/tweeting these people?”
“Isn't it weird that you are such good friends with people who don't even live here?”
“Are you going to meet those people in Vegas again?!”

Yes, my “fake” friends.

The very same “fake” friends who, within hours (and in some instances, minutes) of the news about Gracie from EPW, rallied, communicated, planned and organized.

Like the “fake” friend who got on an 8am flight Saturday from Toronto to San Francisco to be with EPW for one full (and uncertain) week. Oh, and she left three not-at-all-fake young kids at home with their Dad so she could do so. (She runs a business, too, by the way. So she has just a tad bit on her plate.)

Then there is the “fake” friend (in Indiana) who, by Thursday night, had emailed Carla (Calgary) and me (Florida) log-in, scheduling, calendar and inside business information so that we could coordinate and plan for an unspecified amount of time's worth of blog posts, tweets, emails and promotions.

From the first night, Carla was researching the science and medical aspects, tweeting for EPW, strategizing and keeping her head on straight. (In fact, her business head and practical questions gave me a cold hard dose of reality in terms of how my own business would fare if I had to leave it indefinitely. Lots to look at and change in that department for me, but that's for another post.)

Ken and Carla didn't let emotion stop them; in fact, it made them more focused and purposeful in their emails and actions. Admirable in any situation; freakin shake-your-head amazing given the distance, the full plates we all already have and their no-nonsense approach. (Maybe they felt they could focus better after telling me that they were OK with me worrying for the both of them. This is definitely a group in which each person knows his or her place, and does what he/she does best.)

More "fake" friends...including the one who, like me, needs to come up with blog post titles in her head as a sort-of therapeutic way of dealing with whatever this or the next moment brings. Everything has a corresponding blog post title, that's how we process it and carry on. (I always have to remind myself that not everyone is like this. And that it is a little weird, actually. I can say that because I do it too.)

By the way, that's the same "fake" friend (Alabama, by the way) currently driving with her husband and son to North Carolina while communicating with me via texts and updates back and forth.

I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you, as well, about the "fake" friend (sort-of Texas, now dog-sitting in California, couchsurfing everywhere) who is available 24/7 (literally) for jokes of any and all kinds, from corny to belly-laughing to X-rated to so-stupid-I-don't-know-if-it-is-funny-or-ridiculous. (Full disclosure: I knew this "fake" friend from the days before twitter and Facebook, so maybe he is only a "half-fake" friend.)

And then there are the numerous "fake" friends who have emailed, tweeted, texted, called and messaged me over the past 48 or so hours, asking from the bottom of their hearts what they can do for EPW and Grace, how they can help and begging me to, at the very least, make sure Elizabeth knows she is in their thoughts and prayers.

Yes, these are the "fake" friends I am proud to call my own.

The ones who have shown their true colors in ways I'd have bet on but couldn't really have imagined.

The ones whose hearts and minds and business acumen and all-around life skills know no bounds, geographical or otherwise.

The ones I am learning from in many ways, in just about every moment.

These are the ones who, together, are capable of just about anything. The ones who, ultimately, care more than anything about a beautiful and sweet five-year-old girl in a San Francisco hospital bed.

That's some fake stuff, huh?!

As many of you know, EPW and I are in constant touch, literally, every day, all day and some of the night long.

One of the exchanges from what I would imagine is now in the tens of thousands of texts I once sent her talked about my views on the term “IRL” or “In Real Life.”

Sometimes, when people who know each other through a medium like twitter meet up offline, they say they are finally meeting “IRL.” I told EPW that I didn’t feel that was an accurate term because a massive part of my “RL” is people who don’t live in my area code. People I don’t see every day or every week or even every month. I told her I felt that using that acronym downplayed the significance or importance of what were and are some of the most important relationships in my life. They are part of my “RL” even if I don’t see them every day or every week (or month).

So I always use the term “f2f” (face-to-face) as opposed to “IRL.” Telling her that made me feel better, though it didn’t seem terribly significant at the time.

Now, it makes more sense than I could have imagined.

These “fake” friends? I’ve never met anyone like them. I’ve never seen a group of people come together in such a loving and totally productive way. Without fanfare. Without nonsense. Just doing what needs to get done for our friend. Our very, very “fake” friend.

So to my “fake” friends, and there are many more of you than those I have mentioned by name here, I say **THANK YOU**.

Thank you for showing me that true friendship and true love can be and are very, very real and profound no matter what form (or medium) they come in.

Thank you for being as weird as I am, for being able to take charge when you need to, for shining in moments that aren’t bright and happy and shiny and for letting me worry (quietly) and write blogs and emails for EPW so that I can do what I do best. (Just don’t ask me to take over any tech-related responsibilities.)

And, above all, **thank you** for letting me be in this IRL, not-always-face-to-face, not-your-mother’s-friendship with all of you.

So with apologies to Oprah, I will now tell you what I know for sure: Some of you may question or judge what is unfamiliar or uncomfortable to you. I know it because I have been on the judging end, and I have been on the being-judged end.

Either way, my love, my friends and my world may not look like yours. It doesn’t have to and they don’t have to. That doesn’t change how very, very real it all is, or how very, very fortunate I am.

So next time you want to ask me why I text so much on my phone, or what’s with my obsession with twitter or who these people in freakin Canada, Indiana, California, Alabama and who-knows-where-else are, please remember what I have shared with you today.

These people are some of the best friends I have ever had. And even more, they are my family.

#thatissall