

4 Ways to Evaluate Female Friendships

I fly a lot. Maybe too much. It's how I get to where I need to be to do what I do. Thankfully, I'm on my last regional jet for the year.

There was a time when flying was an adventure, when you boarded large airliners that left on time filled with food, soft blankets and fluffy pillows, which were distributed to all by happy attendants. But that's not how it looks anymore. Sometimes I feel like hours of my life have been hijacked by the airlines.

More often than not, the planes now come in two categories: small and smaller. Flights are so frequently canceled, I've learned to rejoice if mine is simply delayed. Food? No way! It's no longer included in the mix of escalating airfares.

Regional jets don't have the overhead space for carry-ons (leave it planeside), let alone blankets or pillows. Too often, the wear and tear of travel has taken its toll on flight attendants, and you'll notice the skies are not so friendly any more. In short, regional jets are cheaper to operate, but they are not equipped to take you very far.

Some **relationships** feel like regional jets. No matter how many times you enter them, they feel the same: cramped, poorly maintained, easily canceled, often delayed, costly, stingy and short-ranged. Like a regional jet, these **relationships** do not have the equipment or capacity to take you very far (even though they carry the same price tag as travel on a 747!).

No matter how many times you prove your loyalty (a true frequent flier), it isn't long before you discover the **friendship** is one-sided. You pay; they take. You never truly move forward because the seatbelt sign is always on,

preventing you from ever rising to a place of relief.

Life is a journey that is best traveled with friends. As you move into the next year, ask yourself:

- Am I traveling unfriendly skies?
- Am I reinforcing a relationship that is not long-range?
- Do we have the same destination in mind?
- Am I investing in what is consistently robbing me of one of my most treasured commodities—my time?

Not every relationship will—or should—last a lifetime. Some connections are made for a season. You can't always know which friendships will be long-range, but you can choose to recognize and invest in the friendships that have the capacity to go far.

Lisa Bevere *is a best-selling author of* Fight Like a Girl, Kissed the Girls and Made them Cry, Out of Control and Loving It! *and* Be Angry and Don't Blow It! *In addition to speaking at national and international conferences, she is a frequent guest on Christian television and radio shows. She and her husband, best-selling author John Bevere, make their home in Colorado.*