

A Tribute to Cheryl

11 November 1956 – 23 September 2000

For 22 years I was friends with Cheryl and what a time it was.

In our long friendship we were there for each other during many good times and bad.

It was actually during a difficult time in my life, that my friendship with Cheryl became everlasting. She took my daughter and I into her home when we had no where else to go and she always made us feel welcome.

During those difficult months she helped make my life bearable and I have never forgotten what she did for me and I never will.

I saw many changes in Cheryl's life throughout the years I knew her but the most profound was the discovery of her spirituality. I remember she began that amazing journey because of her fascination with the power of the mind.

Over the years I saw her develop a deep connection with spirituality and her beliefs gave her great comfort and contentment.

Throughout our friendship I was always fascinated by Cheryl's ability to face life's difficulties with unflinching strength – she never seemed to get down by life's unfairness. Instead she embraced hardship with the same passion she embraced life.

She always seemed so strong, so fearless and so invincible to me. I very much admired her strength of character and gutsy attitude.

I also admired her non-judgmental nature – she always found good in people and whenever I tried to point out a person's shortcomings she would tell me to look at myself before I judged others. She also explained to me that what annoyed me about other people was something I needed to deal with within myself.

Cheryl always marched to her own drum. She made her own rules and wasn't afraid of being different. She was always true to herself and she rarely let other people's opinion worry her. She was very different than most people, but that's what made her special.



I don't know too many other people, especially women, who would take up motor bike riding after they turned 40, and riding a Kawasaki 750 at that!

Over the years my friendship with Cheryl deepened. We shared many secrets and we were always able to be our true selves with each other.

But our friendship was far from tranquil – we had some amazing arguments and no one got me riled up like Cheryl did. But no matter what happened between us and what was said, we always remained great friends.

In the last few years of her life we didn't see each other as much as we had in time gone by but our friendship never faded and when we did see each other it was as it had always been.

I know that Cheryl felt her greatest achievement in life was her son, Lee. She often told me how proud she was of him and how he had turned out to be a great young man. She felt very strongly he would make something of himself.

Whenever we met she would talk about her friends and family. She would tell me all the news about everyone and it was always obvious to me how much she cared for her parents, sisters, brothers and friends.

She also talked to me about her future. She wanted to become a natural health therapist. I was so proud of her when she started studying and she was determined to succeed.

Tragically, she was not able to fulfill her dream.

The world is a darker place for me now she has gone and there are many things I miss about her. I miss our dinners at Manuka, I miss visiting her at her home in Narrabundah, I miss our arguments about religion and the meaning of life, I miss her sense of humor and quick wit, and I miss her strength of character and her non-judgmental nature. But most of all I miss her laugh – it was her trademark.

Cheryl lived her life her own way, with spirit and humor. She was a likeable larrikin and I know she would have had few regrets.

Knowing Cheryl enriched my life.

I think of you often, dear friend.



Post-script

Some time after Cheryl had died in a car accident I was telling another friend, Robyn, about how I missed her and the circumstances surrounding her death. I was surprised to see tears well up in Robyn's eyes but it was not due to empathy over a stranger's death that she cried. I came to learn that the night Cheryl died Robyn was driving by the accident scene minutes after it happened – she found Cheryl lying peacefully on the ground and covered her with a shawl and stayed with her until the ambulance arrived.

Until our conversation that day, Robyn did not know whether the woman she found lying on the road near a car wreck had died. Robyn told me that Cheryl was surrounded by love and concern that night and it made me happy knowing Cheryl left this world in a veil of kindness and compassion.

