

The Value of FRIENDSHIP

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Many expats will tell you it can be hard to make friends in Doha. Colleagues and neighbors stream in and out as contracts expire and opportunities arise elsewhere. But as Deliah and Laurence will tell you, when you do finally meet a woman you're willing to call a true girlfriend, nothing life – or Doha - can throw at you will keep you apart!

On LAURENCE a classy satin dress complemented by sexy multi-strapped stilettos. Dress, Joseph, QR1,995. Shoes, Balmain, QR4,350. Earrings, Jean Claude, QR2,225. Bracelet, Jean Claude, QR2,295. Ring, Noir, QR1,250.

“True friendship is like sound health; the value of it is seldom known until it be lost”

CHARLES CALEB COLTON

Deliah Furcoi, 30, is the sales and marketing manager of *ABODE* Magazine. Ethnically Filipino, she was born and raised in Qatar. Laurence Udo, 35, is a French national who works as a public relations and marketing manager. She is currently in between jobs and hoping to stay in Qatar.

These two women met through work, but now their friendship extends far beyond the office. They come from different countries, professions and backgrounds, but the best friends say they share a connection that they hope will stand the test of time long after they have left Qatar.

Q: Describe your spark – what is it that connects the two of you?

Deliah: I think it's because we are all working women trying to do something amazing in the recession, trying to prove ourselves. And I don't think we are quite where we want to be just now, so we are still soul searching, I guess. I think it's a journey...and I am lucky that I have these amazing friends who help each other through it all.

Laurence: The first work meetings we had together, like, after five minutes, it was no longer like a professional meeting; it was like a chat! I'm one of those kinds of people that if [the spark] is not there, I'm not going to make the effort for people that I don't think are going to be positive in my life. But once you have a connection, even if your friend hasn't called you in a month and then she calls and says she's had just a terrible day, you will be there for her. That's what a real friend is and it doesn't matter how busy you are. If your friend needs you, you have to be there. And that's why Deliah is a real friend for me; she is there when it counts.

Q: How has this friendship helped you to transition to life in Doha?

Deliah: I think the most significant thing for expats is that because they are so far away from home, finding amazing friends, like Laurence and holding on to them is very important. I find it very challenging trying to open up to things because most of the time I am at work. And when you



DELIAH Busy ladies could rely to this pencil cut dress, low-key but stylish. Dress, Paola Frani, QR1,795. Love Soni, Necklace, QR895, Bracelet, QR850, Ring, QR395. Available at Salam Stores Furniture at Roche Bobois

LAURENCE Dreamy blue empire cut dress brings out statuesque figure, ideal for every shape. Dress, SKY, QR2,950. Ring, QR1,095. Necklace, Rosantia Milano, QR2,495. Available at Salam Stores
Furniture at Roche Bobois



do let your hair down, it's tough trying to find common ground with somebody who can see eye-to-eye with you on issues, especially personal ones too.

Q: Describe a painful moment that your friends helped you through.

Laurence: I'm, at the moment, in a bit of a difficult situation [in between jobs], and I have to say that if I didn't have Deliah, I probably would have packed up already! I'm really thankful that she is here. It's actually quite rare to find people you can rely on for everything.

Q: How have your different backgrounds affected your friendship?

Deliah: Bizarrely, we still have things in common because bits of what she has been through are similar to what I've been through.

Q: How do you maintain your friendship with your busy lifestyles, and what do you do for fun together?

Laurence: We call each other pretty much every other day. It's planned but more like 'what are you up to tomorrow night.' We organize get-togethers for certain events, like the InterContinental Hotel Beach Party and other events that might be happening that we can share together.

Q: What advice do you have for maintaining friendships?

Deliah: Just as with any other normal relationship, it's the same thing. Even girl friendships need work. You've got to work at it so that you don't lose it. That's one of my resolutions this year: maintaining and nurturing my friendships, because, without a friend like her, I really can't be grounded.

Q: Do you think your friendship can survive beyond Qatar?

Deliah (laughing): Please don't leave me here! I don't know what I would do without you! Seriously, I may be extremely inaccessible when it comes to work, but when there's something up with my friends, yeah I'll jump and I'll fly and go! What's great about working in Qatar is that we're smack dab in the middle of the world, so it's so easy to fly to the States or to Europe. I would drop everything if my friend needed me.

Laurence: Wherever we end up, I'm sure we will be there for each other's lives through Skype, Facebook, BBM and any other social media or form of communication. We will make sure we see each other possibly get married to someone amazing and have kids!



Girlfriends: Enrich your life and improve your health

A close friend is good for your health. She can help you celebrate good times and provide support during bad times. Your girlfriends prevent loneliness and give you a chance to offer needed companionship as well, giving you a sense of belonging and purpose, boosting your happiness, reducing your stress, improving your self-worth.

In fact, Harvard Medical School released a Nurses' Health Study that concluded that not cultivating and keeping our close friendships with other women is harmful to our health. Women with more friends tend to lead happier lives and suffer fewer premature aging issues. This may explain why women enjoy a longer life span than men.

DELIAH is wearing a classy, chic knit 'Abito' exudes divine silhouette paired with shimmering shawl perfect for every look. Dress, Paola Frani, QR1,995. Scarf, Fendi, QR1,795. Shoes, Casadei, QR3,195. Necklace, Love Soni, QR695. Ring, QR1,095. Available at Salam Stores