

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Eleanor L. Goward for the degree of Master of Science
in Human Development and Family Sciences presented on
April 17, 1991.

Title: The Closest Friendships of Adult Women: A
Family Life Cycle Approach.

Abstract approved: *Redacted for Privacy* _____
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Friendship is an extremely significant and meaningful relationship for women of all ages, yet little research has been conducted on the friendships of adult women. Recent research indicates that aspects of friendship change as people progress through their adult years and take on family and work roles, but previous studies have focused on the structural attributes of friendships and not on the qualitative nature of these relationships.

The main focus of this research was the level of emotional closeness between adult women and their closest non-kin friend, and how that closeness may be associated with women's stage of the family life cycle and work status. In addition, frequency of contact and similarities between friends were also investigated. A

questionnaire was mailed to 666 randomly selected women from the voter registration list of a partly urban county. The final sample consisted of 315 adult women.

Findings from this study indicate that emotional closeness and frequency of contact in the closest friendships of adult women were not associated with respondents' family or work status. Women and their closest friends were significantly similar in gender, age, family life cycle stage, and work status. All respondents were more likely to have close friends who were married. Intimacy was found to be related to duration of the friendship, where the friend lives, and form of contact. The primary source of close friendships for women at all stages of the family life cycle was either community or work.

The data indicate that women are similar to their closest friend in certain social attributes and are able to maintain close friendships during adult years even when other roles are making demands on their time and energy. Friendship is a vital and meaningful relationship to women throughout adulthood. Continued research which investigates the qualitative nature of these relationships from a dyadic and longitudinal perspective is needed.

The Closest Friendships of Adult Women:
A Family Life Cycle Approach

by

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A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Science

Completed April 17, 1991

Commencement June 1991

APPROVED:

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Date thesis is presented April 17, 1991

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank my committee for their patience, support, and encouragement on this project. The interest and enthusiasm of Dr. Anisa Zvonkovic was particularly appreciated.

A special thanks to my father who was responsible for planting the seed of interest in pursuing a graduate degree, and to my dear grandmother who gave the initial direction for this research.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Al Davidson, Marion County Clerk, for his help in obtaining the voter registration list. Jan at Salem Downtown Printing was very helpful with copying and layout (often with short lead times!), and her contribution to this project is most appreciated. Suzi Maresh was instrumental in her assistance with the statistics--she helped me see the light at the end of the tunnel!

Many friends and associates also encouraged me in this long process. Special thanks to Toni and Rae, my closest friends, for their support and faith in me. I am also indebted to the many people who kept me in their thoughts and prayers, especially during this past year. Their concern was truly uplifting.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for supporting me in the pursuit of this important goal. For their patience and understanding, I am deeply indebted to my three children, Sean, David, and Lissa. My heartfelt thanks to Rich for his constant encouragement, and especially for spurring me on during the darkest hours. He gave me the hope and courage I needed to continue and fulfill this dream.

Finally, thanks be to God for keeping his promises!

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**THE CLOSEST FRIENDSHIPS OF ADULT WOMEN:
A FAMILY LIFE CYCLE APPROACH**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Friendship is a unique and strong relationship which endures over time (Blieszner, 1988; Wood & Robertson, 1978). During adulthood friendship provides a specific function which other role relationships cannot provide (Oliker, 1989; Simon, Crotts, & Mahan, 1970; Wood & Robertson, 1978). Unfortunately, friendship has received little attention in social science research "because it appears elusive and fragile, sometimes co-exists with other relationships, or is considered to be subordinate or ancillary to more publicly visible and structurally stable relationships" (Johnson & Aries, 1983, p. 353).

Few studies have been conducted to investigate friendship during the adult years. Instead, researchers have placed a greater emphasis on marital, family, and work roles which play a large, and seemingly more important, part in the adult's social experience (Brown, 1981; Johnson & Aries, 1983; Reisman, 1981). Acker, Barry, and Esseveld (1981) contend that the family has been considered to be a "closed system," and that

outside bonds are viewed as competing with the marital dyad, or irrelevant to the family. More recently, researchers have concentrated their efforts on the social networks of adults, which includes kin, neighbors, friends, co-workers, and other social contacts (Ishii-Kuntz & Seccombe, 1989; Levitt, Weber, & Clark, 1986; Milardo, 1988; Milardo, Johnson, & Huston, 1983; Shulman, 1975). In these investigations friendship has been obscured because it is included within the entire social network of adults instead of being studied as a separate relationship.

There is increasing evidence that friendship is indeed an important social relationship in the lives of individuals. Several studies have linked close personal relationships, which include friendship, with well-being (Blieszner, 1988; Chown, 1981; Lowenthal & Haven, 1968; Wood & Robertson, 1978) and life satisfaction (Chown, 1981). Friendship also offers emotional support (Levitt, Weber, & Clark, 1986; Oliner, 1989), and generates enjoyment over the life-span (Larson & Bradney, 1988).

The literature indicates that throughout life women seem to place a greater importance on friendship than men (Blieszner, 1988; Oliner, 1989). During childhood girls interact in smaller, more intensive groups than boys (Dickens & Perlman, 1981), and in adolescence

females have fewer close friends and discuss more personal matters compared to males (Kon, 1981). During adulthood females have more friends than males (Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975), and these friendships are more intimate and reciprocal (Reisman, 1981). Chown (1981) reports that older women have more friends outside the family than males and that females are more likely to have a confidant. Unfortunately, there has been little research conducted to investigate women's friendships during their adult years.

According to Argyle and Furnham (1983) females derive more satisfaction than males from being with friends, and from giving and getting emotional support, sharing issues of mutual concern, and discussing personal problems. These are all factors associated with intimacy, a variable which appears to be extremely salient and essential to female friendships (Oliker, 1989). Because intimacy is crucial to these friendships, and because there is evidence that aspects of friendship change as people age (Ishii-Kuntz & Seccombe, 1989; Shulman, 1975; Stueve & Gerson, 1977; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975), the quality of intimacy in close friendships of women at different stages in the family life cycle is an important topic to investigate.

Much of the friendship literature has focused on the structural content of friendship over the life cycle

(Shulman, 1975). These structural components include size, composition, homogeneity, and stability (Milardo, 1986). There has been little information regarding the nature or meaning of friendship, especially in the middle years (Blieszner, 1988). In the past frequency of contact was often considered to be an indicator of closeness, but frequency of contact and closeness have been found to be independent components of close relationships (Burt, 1986; Dickens & Perlman, 1981). Therefore, it would appear that more research should be conducted regarding emotional closeness in friendships.

Statement of the Problem

This study will investigate the relationship between women's stage of the family life cycle and work status, and emotional closeness in their closest friendship. Research indicates that friendship is a relationship that is viable and important throughout the life cycle, especially for women. Intimacy reflects an important qualitative attribute of friendships that has not been adequately addressed in previous research, especially in studies of women's friendships. It is this emotional quality of the friendship relationship that appears to be most salient to women and needs investigation. Although intimacy is certainly a significant aspect of women's friendships, personal

relationships include other qualities as well. These include disclosure (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1981; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Morton & Douglas, 1981) and attachment (O'Connor & Brown, 1988). Negative aspects of relationships have also been addressed in previous studies (Argyle & Furnham, 1983; Leffler, Krannich, & Gillespie, 1986), so the costs associated with friendship relationships will also be investigated. Dickens and Perlman (1981), in their overview of friendship over the life cycle, emphasize the need to explore the qualitative nature of friendship over time and to use more than one segment of the life cycle. This study is an attempt to discover how emotional closeness in friendship is associated with the family and work roles of adult women.

Research Objectives

This study has three major research objectives:

1. To assess how emotional closeness in friendship changes in adulthood as a result of different family and work statuses.
2. To assess similarities between friends in marital status, family life cycle stage, and work status.
3. To obtain other information, both descriptive and qualitative, to give a more complete picture of these relationships.

Definition of Terms

Stage of the family life cycle - refers to the "successive phases and patterns" (Duvall, 1977, p. 141) of family living over the years.

Emotional closeness - for the purpose of this study, emotional closeness is composed of intimacy, attachment, and disclosure. In addition, relationship costs are also components of emotional closeness.

Intimacy - a complex construct which does not lend itself easily to succinct definition. For the purposes of this study intimacy is defined by Walker and Thompson (1983) as "a multidimensional construct comprising elements of affection (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Foa & Foa, 1974; Hatfield et al., 1979; Marwell & Hage, 1970), altruism (Levinger & Snoek, 1972), enjoyment or satisfaction (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), a feeling that the relationship is important (Huston & Burgess, 1979), openness or honesty (Altman & Taylor, 1973), respect for the partner and acceptance of that person's ideas and criticisms (Altman & Taylor, 1973), solidarity (Levinger & Snoek, 1972; Scanzoni, 1979) and a temporal commitment or sense of the certainty of the relationship (Huston & Burgess, 1979)" (p. 842).

Attachment - refers to how important it is for the other person to be there, imagining how it would be if the other were not there, feeling that the other person is willing to help, and feeling that the other person will always be there (O'Connor & Brown, 1988).

Disclosure - the extent and depth to which personal information is exchanged (Marsden & Campbell, 1984).

Relationship costs - includes feeling impatient, irritated, angry, resentful, frustrated, tied down, and feeling that one cannot satisfy the other (Walker, Jones, & Martin, 1989).

Work status - refers to either paid or unpaid work. This will be operationalized as full-time paid work, part-time paid work, homemaking, and other.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Most studies have concluded that the role of friendship may compete with the other roles in adults' lives, especially family and paid work roles (Blieszner, 1988; Larson & Bradney, 1988; Lopata, 1981; Lopata & Barnewolt, 1984). Shulman (1975) and Hess (1972) assert that the amount of time required for an individual to sustain close relationships is finite. According to Shulman (1975) the need for intimacy will be met in family relationships. He states, "The married person will therefore have fewer needs to be satisfied outside the home and therefore will be less actively involved in his [sic] network" (p. 818).

On the other hand, Palisi (1985) studied the relationship between interaction with spouse/kin and interaction with friends. Data in this study indicated that high levels of interaction with both spouse/kin and friends could be maintained simultaneously. Interaction with spouse/kin did not preclude high levels of interaction with friends. Similarly, Marks (1977) contended that time and energy are variable and flexible, and that it is possible to fulfill all roles well as long as there is commitment to them.

Oliker (1989), in her examination of close friends and marriage, found close friendships to be very vital relationships to her subjects. Half the women in her study indicated that friendships enhanced their marital relationships. None of the women in her study felt the values unique to her friendship had a negative effect on her marriage. One quarter felt the effects were both good and bad; the final quarter reported no real effects on their marriages. Oliker discovered a tacit agreement between women friends to respect their marriages as the highest priority. From this data it appears friendship may not compete with marriage, but may complement and enhance the marital relationship.

It is evident that the literature to date is inconclusive regarding the relationship between family and work roles, and the other social roles which individuals fill during their adult lives. The primary focus of this research was to examine the relationship between family and work roles of adult women and the affective qualities of their closest friendships. This chapter reviews literature regarding family life cycle, work, and emotional closeness as it relates to friendships. In addition, research which discusses other factors important in the study of friendship relationships is discussed. Hypotheses of this study are also presented.

Close Friendship: A Family Development Approach

Evelyn Duvall and Reuben Hill were instrumental in conceptualizing the family development framework in the late 1940's. The family development approach combines ideas from the symbolic interactionist perspective and human development theories of developmental tasks and stages. It is a framework that catches what a given family is experiencing at a particular time in its life and at a given point in history (Aldous, 1990; Duvall, 1977).

The family development approach visualizes the family as "an organization of growing, changing persons, reciprocally engaged in enabling one another (husband; wife; parents interacting with siblings; and siblings interacting with siblings) to work through their several changing developmental tasks over the life span" (Hill, 1986, p. 20). Rogers (1964) referred to the family as "a semi-closed system of interacting personalities" (p. 264). These descriptions of the family point to the strength of the family development approach in that it treats all members of the family as individuals and as members of the family group. This approach also recognizes the interrelatedness of individuals, family members, and the larger social environment in which families exist (Aldous, 1990; Duvall, 1977). It also highlights the ability of the framework to deal with

change and stress points in the family over its career. As family members change roles and role content there is a resulting change in the roles of other family members. This requires a redefinition of the social situation both within and outside the family. For example, friendship must adapt to individual changes and the competing obligations or opportunities of other roles and relationships (Brown, 1981).

Duvall and Hill generated a method for capturing these changes in the family over time. This resulted in an eight-stage model of the family life cycle. Stages were defined based on a) change in family size, b) age of the oldest child, and, c) work status of the breadwinner (Hill, 1986). Several studies have utilized aspects of the family life cycle to investigate social networks, including friendship in adulthood (Ishii-Kuntz & Seccombe, 1989; Shulman, 1975; Stueve & Gerson, 1977; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975). All of these studies found variations in friendships across life cycle stages.

Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) investigated variations in life stage and number of friends, frequency of contact, duration of the friendship, sex and age of friend, and the function of friendship. Their sample of 216 adult subjects were interviewed extensively regarding the structure and functional characteristics of their friendships. The subjects were categorized by

life stages of high school, newlywed, middle-aged, and preretirement.

Involvement with friends decreased over stages from high school to middle-aged, then increased slightly at preretirement. Older respondents had longer lasting friendships, and the majority of closest friends were similar in age and gender to the respondent.

In addressing the function of friendship Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) asked subjects to provide subjective descriptions of an ideal close friend and a real close friend. They found that reciprocity, with an emphasis on helping and support, was an important quality in ideal friendships. However, similarity, having common behaviors and interests, was the quality which was predominant in real friendships. Weiss and Lowenthal determined that the qualities associated with real friends were consistent across all stages. The functions of friendship appeared to be established at an early age and maintained through life.

Shulman (1975) conducted a study of 347 men and women from ages 18 to 65 to investigate life cycle variation in the composition, stability, and level of involvement of personal networks. The respondents were drawn from a larger study, selected by a stratified random procedure. One hundred ninety-eight respondents were selected and asked to name up to six close

relationships outside the home and provide information regarding these relationships. These intimates (n=149) were then interviewed as well.

Life cycle variations were found in the networks of the subjects. Younger subjects were found to have greater involvement in their networks than married subjects. Shulman (1975) felt this finding supported the principle that there is a finiteness to close relationships in the amount of time, emotional energy, and needs that must be expended to sustain the relationship. Shulman stated, "From the consideration of these findings we would conclude that the nature of close relationships does vary with life cycle changes and that at each stage people tend to establish and sustain networks of relationships geared to the needs and concerns of their particular stage of life" (p. 820).

As part of a broader study reanalyzing data from the Detroit Area Study of 1965-66, Stueve and Gerson (1977) looked specifically at close relationships of 811 male subjects. Their data also indicated that stage of the life cycle did impact these close friendships. They state, "Our results indicated, in fact, that a major, if not the major, influence on individuals' networks is their position in the life-cycle" (p. 79).

Stage of the life cycle impacted the social context

in which friendships were formed. Men at earlier stages of the family life cycle reported more close friendships formed during childhood, while men at later stages reported their closest friendships were formed on the job or in their neighborhood. Age was a significant factor in the friendships of these men. Most close friendships were formed with age peers, although as men got older, friends were selected from a wider age range. The duration of friendships also varied with life cycle stage. Men at later stages were more likely to form and maintain long-lasting friendships. More turnover of close friends occurred during the early adult years. Frequency of contact with close friends declined over life stage, however, intimacy did not. Thus, Stueve and Gerson (1977) concluded that while adult roles associated with the family may have placed structural constraints on men in terms of their close friendships, there was not a net decline in the intimacy men felt for their closest friends.

Ishii-Kuntz and Seccombe (1989) investigated the impact of children on participation in social networks. Their sample consisted of 2,194 married adults with and without children. Married persons were classified into family life cycle stages based on the age of the youngest child. These classifications included parents whose youngest child was under 6 years old, parents

whose youngest child was between 6 and 18, and parents whose youngest child was older than 18 and did not live in the same household. Data from this study indicated that parents in the "empty nest" period were more involved in their social network. Ishii-Kuntz and Seccombe found "the more dependent parents and children are on each other, the less likely are parents to be involved in a social support network" (p. 780).

Each of these studies did find life cycle variations in friendships of adults, but only two (Stueve & Gerson, 1977; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975) dealt with variation in non-structural qualities of close friendships. Stueve and Gerson (1977) were the only researchers to deal with the affective quality of close friendships. Unfortunately, this study only included male respondents. The focus of most of these studies centered on the structural characteristics of friendship (i.e., number of friends, duration, age) and not the quality of the relationship. The emphasis of these studies was also on the broader social environment in which people interact, with friendship being only one of the social relationships investigated.

Work Status

Women are increasing their participation in the work force (Piotrkowski & Repetti, 1984). The amount of

time that women engage in paid work may have an influence on their closest friendship. On the one hand the environment of the labor force may provide women increased access to a pool of social resources from which an intimate relationship can be developed (Lowenthal & Haven, 1968). On the other hand, paid work may add additional role requirements and compete for time and energy with other roles. Oliner (1989) found that women were unlikely to establish close friendships in the work environment.

Unfortunately, many studies treat employment as a "simple dichotomous variable" so that the number of hours a woman works for pay is not considered (Piotrkowski & Repetti, 1981, p. 103). There may be a difference in the amount of time and energy a full-time and a part-time employed woman can contribute to her friendships. From the literature it is unclear how women's work status is associated with emotional closeness in their closest friendships.

Affective Factors

The degree of emotional closeness is assumed to be present in close relationships, but little research has been conducted to assess closeness in friendships once they have been established, especially for same-sex friendships. Chown (1981) discussed the dimensions of

friendship in terms of a) frequency or infrequency of contact, b) transient vs. long-term acquaintance, and c) superficiality vs. depth of feeling. It is this latter dimension which has received the least attention in the literature. Lowenthal and Haven (1968) looked at the close relationships of 280 subjects age 60 and older. When dealing with the concept of intimacy they stated "...we were struck by the paucity of references to the quality, depth or reciprocity of personal relationships in social science materials" (p. 21). Indeed, most studies on friendship deal with the structural and quantitative aspects of friendships rather than qualitative characteristics which include intimacy, disclosure, attachment, and relationship costs.

In their interviews Lowenthal and Haven (1968) asked their subjects if there was a particular person in whom they could confide. This was then defined as an intimate relationship. Stueve and Gerson (1977) measured intimacy in their male subjects by asking how close the subjects felt to their selected friends. Friendships which were characterized as "very close" were categorized as being intimate.

Two studies have operationalized emotional closeness in a more complex manner. Walker and Thompson (1983) utilized five scales which reflected the

multidimensional quality of this construct, including items which assessed intimacy, attachment, disclosure, tension, and worry. These subscales were used in investigating the intergenerational relationship between daughters and their mothers. Williams (1985) developed a scale which captured modes of interaction indicating emotional intimacy in same-sex friendships. This scale included dimensions of mutual self-disclosure, shared feelings, and demonstrations of closeness. Both the Walker and Thompson and Williams study conceptualized closeness as a multidimensional construct which captures the complexity, richness, and affective characteristics of individual's close relationships.

Women place a greater emphasis on intimacy in their relationships both in what they desire (Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975) and in what they actually receive from close friendships (Lowenthal & Haven, 1968; Oliner, 1989; Williams, 1985). Argyle and Furnham (1983) found that females derived most satisfaction from giving and receiving emotional support, discussing personal problems and issues of personal concern, as well as just being with the other person, rather than sharing activities together. All these data indicate that it is the affective qualities (i.e., intimacy, disclosure) which are the most salient and rewarding characteristics of women's closest friendships.

Other Factors

In addition to addressing the relationship between stage of family life cycle, work status, and emotional closeness, the literature suggests other variables which are factors in the study of adult friendship. These factors include:

Costs. Although there is little evidence to suggest that close friendships are characterized by a high degree of conflict or costs (Argyle & Furnham, 1983; Oliner, 1989), all relationships entail some costs, even in time spent attending to the relationship. It is plausible that there could be a certain amount of negative impact on women who are balancing family, work, and other important social roles. As Oliner (1989) states, "We might look for conflicting demands on women's time, jealousy of attachments, and competing loyalties..." (p. 112).

Frequency of Contact. Studies have found that frequency of contact is impacted by stage of the life cycle. Data from studies conducted by Larson and Bradney (1988), Weiss and Lowenthal (1975), and Stueve and Gerson (1977) indicate that frequency of contact with close friends decreases over the life cycle, but may increase once children have left home (Ishii-Kuntz & Seccombe, 1989; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975).

Contact is critical in the establishment of close relationships. Hendrick and Hendrick (1983) define intimacy as "the degree of closeness two people achieve. Closeness means both physical closeness (being together, touching) and psychological closeness" (p. 18). Data from life span studies (Larson & Bradney, 1988; Stueve & Gerson, 1977; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975) would suggest that regular contact with close friends is not necessary to maintain the most intimate of friendships.

Duration of Friendships. Stueve and Gerson (1977) found that among men during young adulthood there was a turnover of best friends, while older men had long-lasting relationships. They suggest that older men may have assessed their friendships over time and retained those that they felt were the most valuable. Friendships of longer duration may be more intimate (Dickens & Perlman, 1981) even though the longer the friends have known each other, the less contact they have (Verbrugge, 1983). As Hess (1972) states, "There is, it seems, something so compelling about friends one has been able to keep across time and space that intimacy can be re-established on the infrequent occasions of meeting" (p. 380).

Age and Gender of Friend. In general, people usually establish friendships with those who are similar in gender and age. Brown (1981), Chown (1981), Dickens

and Perlman (1981), Oliner (1989) and Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) all found that friends were close to the same age and of the same gender. An important quality of friendship is that it is based on equality (Stueve & Gerson, 1977), and age peers and same-sex friends possess more equal status. Social similarity appears to be an important factor in close friendships.

Stage of Family Life Cycle of Friend. Close friends are similar in their marital status (Chown, 1981; Dickens & Perlman, 1981). In a study encompassing more than 200 recently separated adults, Spanier and Thompson (1984) found that there was a slight shift toward naming intimates who were single. The majority of people mentioned by the participants as intimates, however, were married individuals. McCannell (1988) found that contact with friends who were parents remained salient for respondents who became parents, while contact with other friends declined. Hess (1972) states, "Having children of the same age may be a magnet for friendship formation when shared concerns and interests on behalf of their offspring lead to exchange of information and mutual support of their attitudes, feelings, and behavior" (p. 363). Oliner (1989) also found similarities between close friends in childrearing stage. She explained, "Similarities in age, marital status, and childrearing stage suggest that women draw

closest to others who are sharing central identity-defining experiences" (p. 85).

Where the Friendship was Established. Men in early stages of the family life cycle were more likely to report that close friendships were formed during childhood, while respondents in later stages of the family life cycle reported close friendships formed from paid work and neighborhood associations (Stueve & Gerson, 1977). Hess (1972) suggested that women may form friendships with women who have children of a similar age. These women are most likely to be neighbors. Babchuk and Bates (1963) suggested that husbands influence their wives' friendships by initiating and maintaining the couple's closest friendships. Oliker (1989) reported that virtually all of the women in her study chose their closest friends independently of their husbands. Oliker also found that women were unlikely to establish a close friendship at work or church. She explains that women desire to make friendship choices independent of fixed roles, relationships, or institutions. Few close friendships were established in the neighborhood, except for mothers who were more likely to establish friendships there.

Summary

Research indicates that close friendships are

very salient to women. Little is known, however, regarding the affective quality of these relationships as women develop through their adult years (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1981; Dickens & Perlman, 1981). Emotional closeness in friendships and how it is associated with women's family and work roles will be a major focus of this study. Other variables that are important in the investigation of adult friendships have been identified as well. Many researchers have found friends to be similar in age, gender, and marital status. Other attributes such as presence of children and paid work participation should be similar as well. Frequency of contact, duration of the friendship, and where the friendship was established have been variables of interest in describing friendships more fully. These variables will also be investigated in order to provide a more complete picture of these relationships.

Hypotheses

1. There is significant variation in friendship based on stage of the family life cycle and paid work status evidenced in level of intimacy, attachment, disclosure, costs, and frequency of contact.
2. Women will be significantly similar to the person they specify as their closest friend in marital status,

family life cycle stage, and work status.

3. There is a significant positive correlation between the duration of the friendship and the level of intimacy in the relationship.

4. Where the friendship was established will be significantly related to the family life cycle stage of the respondent.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This study assessed the level of emotional closeness in the closest friendship of adult women and how it was associated with their family life cycle stage and work status. Similarities between friends were also examined. Other descriptive data was gathered to give a more complete picture of close friendships. This chapter details the sample, the design and procedure, the measures, and the analytic approach used in this study.

Sample

Three hundred and fifteen adult women participated in this study. The age range for these women was 21 to 65, with a mean age of 43 (s.d.=10.58). Fourteen percent of the women reported having post-college education, 17% reported completing three to four years of college, and 34% reported completing one to two years of college. Four percent had attended a business, professional, or trade school, and 31% had completed six to twelve years of school. Eighty-five percent of the women were currently married, 12% were separated or

divorced, and 3% were widowed. (Never married single women were not included in this study.) Ninety-one percent of the sample had children, while 9% did not. Percentages for stages of the family life cycle were as follows: Stage 1, Married No Children, 8.9%; Stage 2, Oldest Child Birth to 12 Years, 22.8%; Stage 3, Oldest Child 13 to 20 Years--Children at Home, 40.9%; and Stage 4, Oldest Child 20--No Children at Home, 27.3%. Fifty-one percent of the women participated in paid work full time, 19% worked part time, 18% were homemakers, 12% had some other work status. Of the sample, 97% were White, 2% were White/Hispanic, and 1% were Asian or Pacific Islander.

Design and Procedure

Data was collected through the use of a questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaire was pre-tested according to the process described in Dillman (1978). The questionnaire was given to two professional colleagues for their appraisal, and it was also piloted on two groups of women at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon. One group was comprised of women from the Life Skills Program. This is a program for single parents and homemakers to achieve economic self-sufficiency. The second group was comprised of staff from the college.

The format for the questionnaire, which was divided into five sections, was adapted from Dillman (1978). The general instructions for completing the questionnaire were adapted from Babbie (1979). In the first section participants were asked about their close friendships in general--whether they had a close friend, how many close friends they had, and then participants were asked to specify their closest non-kin close friend at that point in time. Non-kin friends were specified because there seems to be more research which has investigated relationships between women and their spouses and kin relations.

In the second section participants were asked to provide information regarding their friendship with the closest friend they had identified. Information included how often they are in contact with their friend, how contact is maintained, where they met, how long they have know each other, whether the friend is older, younger, or the same age, and where the friend lives in comparison to the participant (i.e., same city, same state, etc.). Questions which dealt with where the friendship was established (Page 84, Question F) and the age of the friend (Page 84, Question H) were adapted from Stueve and Gerson (1977). Participants were also asked about the gender, marital status, family life cycle stage, and work status of their friend.

The third section included scales to assess intimacy, disclosure, attachment, and relationship costs in this particular friendship. These scales are described in more detail later in the Measures Section.

The fourth section asked for information about the participant's educational level, marital and family status, and work status. The final section contained two open-ended questions for participants to discuss aspects of their friendship which may not have been covered by the questionnaire. The final page of the questionnaire was adapted from Dillman (1978). Participants were asked if there was any further information they would like to provide about their closest friendship. They were then thanked for their contribution and advised of the procedure for obtaining results of the study.

The finalized questionnaire was mailed to 666 women randomly selected from the voter registration list in Marion County, Oregon (pop. 209,200). Each questionnaire was given an identification number to identify and track questionnaires that had been returned. One form of the questionnaire was used in order to maintain the logical flow of the questions (Dillman, 1978). There were a total of two mailings. Initially each subject received a letter of explanation (Appendix B), a copy of the questionnaire (Appendix A),

and a self-addressed business reply envelope. Three weeks after the initial mailing another letter (Appendix C), a copy of the questionnaire, and a self-addressed business reply envelope was sent to those who had not responded to the first mailing. Of the 666 letters originally sent out, 26 were returned as undeliverable, 10 respondents did not wish to participate, and 23 were not used because of their age, their closest friend was a relative, or they were single. A final questionnaire was excluded because it was returned after the data had been analyzed. Responses were not received from 291 women. The final sample consisted of 315 women. The n's vary in the subsequent analyses due to missing data. The response rate for this study was 47%.

Measures

Measure of Family Life Cycle. Participants were originally classified in to categories based on Duvall's Eight-Stage Family Life Cycle (1977). This conceptualization relies on the age of the oldest child. As Duvall states, "The oldest child is always taking his [sic] family with him or with her out into the growing edges of family experience" (p. 145). Duvall's eighth stage, Aging Family Members, was not used because there is currently a larger body of research which addresses the friendships of older women (Chown, 1981; Roberto &

Scott, 1984; Shea, Thompson, & Blieszner, 1988). After analyzing the data originally, it was necessary to combine several stages to increase cell sizes for more reliable data analysis. The questions which assessed family life cycle stage are found in Appendix A, Page 85, Questions L and M and Page 88, Questions D and E.

The original categories used were:

- (1) Married women--without children
- (2) Women with young children--oldest child birth to 5 years
- (3) Women with school children--oldest child 6 to 12 years
- (4) Women with teenagers--oldest child 13 to 19 years.
- (5) Women with launching families--first child gone to last child's leaving - operationalized as oldest child aged 20 and above, with at least one child at home.
- (6) Middle-aged women--all children gone to age 65 - operationalized as oldest child aged 20 and above, no children remaining at home.

The final categories used were:

- (1) Married women--without children
- (2) Women with young children--oldest child birth to 12 years
- (3) Women with older children--oldest child 13 to

age 20 and above, children at home

(4) Middle-aged women--oldest child aged 20 and above, no children remaining at home

Measures of Emotional Closeness. The questions assessing emotional closeness are found in Appendix A beginning on Page 85, continuing through page 87. A scale adapted from Walker and Thompson (1983) was used to assess the positive affective qualities of the friendship relationship. The reliability for this scale ranges from .91 to .97 (Cronbach Alpha). Items which tapped intimacy, attachment, and disclosure were used. Items were rated using a five-point scale of "not true" to "always true." Lower scores indicated lower levels of the factor being measured, while higher scores indicated higher levels.

Relationship costs were measured using five items adapted from Walker, Jones, and Martin (1989). These items were derived from the Interpersonal Costs (Factor 2) section. These include items such as feeling impatient, irritated, angry, resentful, frustrated, tied down, and feeling that one cannot satisfy the other. The reliability (Cronbach Alpha) for the Interpersonal Costs section of the scale was reported as .85. These items were placed randomly throughout the scale assessing level of intimacy, disclosure, and attachment, and were rated in the same manner. Lower scores

reflected lower levels of costs; higher scores reflected higher levels of costs.

Analytic Approach

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance design was used to test Hypothesis #1. This enables the researcher to test for relationships between multiple independent variables and multiple dependent variables. To test for similarities between participants and their closest friend (Hypothesis #2), a goodness of fit design was used, utilizing the Chi-square statistic. The Chi-square statistic "is a measure of the departure of obtained frequencies from the frequencies expected by chance" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 168). If the Chi-square value obtained is statistically significant, it shows a relationship between the independent and dependent variables, but it does not explain the magnitude of the relation (Reynolds, 1977). To get a better idea of the magnitude of the relationship the C statistic (Coefficient of Contingency) was calculated. The C statistic ranges from .00 to 1.00, with a larger value indicating a stronger relationship. Using the Chi-square statistic, C statistic, and the percentages from the cross-tabulations, data were then interpreted. Correlations were utilized to test the relationship between intimacy and duration of the friendship in

Hypothesis #3. For Hypothesis #4 a goodness of fit design, using the Chi-square and C statistic was utilized.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study questioned whether women are able to maintain high levels of emotional closeness and similar levels of contact with their closest friends during adulthood when family and work roles are also placing demands on their time and energy. In addition, similarities between women and their best friends were examined. Before turning to the hypotheses, the sample was first analyzed to see if there were significant differences between women in the sample. This chapter will address the differences between women in the sample, provide descriptive information regarding the closest friendship of the participant, address the testing of the hypotheses, and then discuss responses to the open-ended questions.

Testing for Differences

The first analysis tested for differences between the women in the sample who indicated they had a close friend (n=272) and those who indicated they did not (n=43). T-tests and cross-tabulations with Chi-square tests were computed to determine if there were differences in age, education, marital status, family

life cycle status, work status, and ethnic background between women who had a close friend and those who reported they had no close friend. No significant differences were revealed. The women who reported having no close friend(s) were excluded from the hypotheses testing, but were included in the qualitative discussion of adult women's friendships because they provided valuable information regarding the variables of interest in this research. The comments they made when answering the open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire provided additional information which is important in completely understanding the friendships of adult women.

To address whether significant differences existed between married women, separated or divorced women, and widowed women, ANOVAs were computed on the following variables: age of respondent, intimacy, disclosure, attachment, costs, and duration of friendship. The only significant difference between women was in age ($p < .001$). The mean age for married women ($n=269$) was 41.97 (s.d.=10.15). Mean age for separated/divorced ($n=37$) was 48.62 (s.d.=10.06), while for the widowed women ($n=9$) the mean was 58.11 (s.d.= 6.83).

Cross-tabulations and the Chi-square statistic were utilized to test for differences between married, separated or divorced, and widowed women on frequency of

contact, form of contact, source of friendship, where friend lives, age of friend, gender of friend, marital status of friend, family life cycle stage of friend, work status of friend, and participants' education, family life cycle, work status, and ethnic background. There were no significant differences between these women in frequency of contact, form of contact, source of friendship, where friend lives, work status of friend, education, and ethnic background. Significant differences between women were revealed in age of friend ($\chi^2=18.96$, d.f.=4, $p<.05$), gender of friend ($\chi^2=13.82$, d.f.=2, $p<.05$), marital status of friend ($\chi^2=15.22$, d.f.=6, $p<.05$), family life cycle stage of friend ($\chi^2=18.50$, d.f.=10, $p<.05$), and participants' family life cycle ($\chi^2=19.73$, d.f.=10, $p<.05$) and work status ($\chi^2=34.25$, d.f.=12, $p<.05$). It was decided to include all these women in the study because the major focus of this study was to assess adult women's friendships. Including the separated or divorced and widowed women resulted in having a more complete picture of friendship in the lives of adult women.

Description of the Friendship

Women reported having between one and twenty-five close friends. The mean number of friends was 4.0 (s.d.=2.63). The majority of women contacted their

closest friend at least two to three times a week. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents had contact with their closest friend at least monthly. The form of contact most respondents used was telephone (56%) followed by face to face contact (36%). The majority of the respondents lived in the same city as their closest friend (56%). Women were similar in gender and age to their closest friend. The majority of friends were female and most were less than two years older or younger than the respondent. Of interest was that male friends were more likely to be older or younger than the respondent, while the majority of female friends were close to the same age. This is illustrated in Table 1. A composite picture of close friendships broken down by participants' family life cycle stage is found in Tables 2 and 3.

Emotional Closeness by Life Cycle Stage and Work Status

Hypothesis #1 suggested that intimacy, attachment, disclosure, costs, and frequency of contact would be significantly associated with stage of the family life cycle and work status. This hypothesis was not supported. A MANOVA with participants' family life cycle stage and work status as the independent variables and intimacy, attachment, disclosure, and costs as the dependent variables showed no significant main effects. The results of the MANOVA are displayed in Table 4.

Table 1

Percentages of Age and Gender of Friend
(n=272)

| | | <u>AGE OF FRIEND</u> | | | Row Total |
|-------------------------------|--------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| | | > 2 YRS YOUNGER | ABOUT THE SAME | > 2 YRS OLDER | |
| <u>GENDER OF FRIEND</u> | MALE | 5 29.4 7.8 | 1 5.9 .8 | 11 64.7 12.6 | 17 6.3 |
| | FEMALE | 59 23.1 92.2 | 120 47.1 99.2 | 76 29.8 87.4 | 255 93.8 |
| Column Total | | 64 23.5 | 121 44.5 | 87 32.0 | 272 100.0 |
| <u>Chi-Square</u> 12.41078 | | <u>D.F.</u> 2 | <u>Significance</u> .002 | <u>C Statistic</u> .2 | |

Table 2

Percentages of Dimensions of Friendship

| | <u>MARRIED</u> | <u>CHILDREN</u> <u>0-12 YRS</u> | <u>CHILDREN</u> <u>13-20+</u> <u>AT HOME</u> | <u>CHILDREN</u> <u>20+ NOT</u> <u>AT HOME</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|---|--------------|
| Close Friends (n=301) | | | | | |
| Yes | 88.0 | 88.4 | 85.4 | 76.2 | 83.7 |
| No | 12.0 | 11.6 | 14.6 | 23.8 | 16.3 |
| Frequency of Contact (n=269) | | | | | |
| % Daily | 9.1 | 17.2 | 19.3 | 10.1 | 15.6 |
| Once/Week | 13.6 | 9.4 | 19.3 | 20.3 | 16.7 |
| 2-3/Week | 18.2 | 37.5 | 28.1 | 21.7 | 27.9 |
| Once/Month | 36.4 | 14.1 | 13.2 | 14.5 | 15.6 |
| 2-3/Month | 13.6 | 12.5 | 9.6 | 21.7 | 13.8 |
| Once/Year | 9.1 | 9.4 | 10.5 | 11.6 | 10.4 |
| Form of Contact (n=268) | | | | | |
| % Mail | 9.1 | 4.8 | 5.3 | 14.5 | 7.8 |
| Telephone | 63.6 | 66.7 | 52.6 | 49.3 | 56.0 |
| Face-to-Face | 27.3 | 28.6 | 42.1 | 36.2 | 36.2 |
| Gender of Friend (n=269) | | | | | |
| % Female | 100.0 | 93.8 | 91.2 | 95.7 | 93.7 |
| Male | 0 | 6.3 | 8.8 | 4.3 | 6.3 |
| Where Friend Lives (n=268) | | | | | |
| % Same City | 28.6 | 65.6 | 61.4 | 46.4 | 56.0 |
| Same State | 33.3 | 18.8 | 22.8 | 30.4 | 24.6 |
| Other State | 38.1 | 15.6 | 15.8 | 23.2 | 19.4 |

Note. N's vary due to missing data.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Dimensions of Friendship

| | <u>MARRIED</u> | <u>CHILDREN</u> <u>0-12 YRS</u> | <u>CHILDREN</u> <u>13-20+</u> <u>AT HOME</u> | <u>CHILDREN</u> <u>20+ NOT</u> <u>AT HOME</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|--|----------------|------------------------------------|--|---|--------------|
| Number of Close Friends (n=260) | | | | | |
| Mean | 3.95 | 4.27 | 3.95 | 3.85 | 4.0 |
| S. D. | (2.36) | (2.71) | (2.27) | (2.01) | (2.63) |
| Duration of Friendship (n=266) | | | | | |
| Mean | 9.18 | 9.21 | 13.90 | 20.37 | 14.05 |
| S.D. | (5.28) | (6.83) | (10.56) | (11.77) | (10.63) |
| Intimacy^a (n=269) | | | | | |
| Mean | 4.26 | 4.35 | 4.40 | 4.46 | 4.39 |
| S.D. | (.42) | (.44) | (.41) | (.44) | (.43) |
| Disclosure^a (n=269) | | | | | |
| Mean | 4.53 | 4.53 | 4.54 | 4.56 | 4.54 |
| S.D. | (.54) | (.49) | (.56) | (.60) | (.55) |
| Attachment^a (n=269) | | | | | |
| Mean | 3.11 | 3.18 | 3.20 | 3.27 | 3.21 |
| S.D. | (.49) | (.65) | (.66) | (.74) | (.67) |
| Costs^a (n=269) | | | | | |
| Mean | 1.26 | 1.34 | 1.21 | 1.19 | 1.24 |
| S.D. | (.27) | (.38) | (.31) | (.28) | (.32) |

^aPossible range of 1 (not true) to 5 (always true), thus higher numbers indicate higher position on this relationship quality dimension

Note. N's vary due to missing data.

Table 4

MANOVA and Univariate F Tables for Family Life Cycle
and Work Effects on Emotional Closeness

| <u>Test Name</u> | <u>Value F</u> | <u>Approx. F</u> | <u>Hypoth. F</u> | <u>Error DF</u> | <u>Sig. of F</u> |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Wilks lambda | .73792 | 1.07131 | 65.00 | 1048.35 | .331 |

Univariate F-test with (13,225) D.F.

| <u>Variable</u> | <u>Hypoth.</u> <u>SS</u> | <u>Error</u> <u>SS</u> | <u>Hypoth.</u> <u>MS</u> | <u>Error</u> <u>MS</u> | <u>F</u> | <u>Sig.</u> <u>of F</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Intimacy | 2.03076 | 41.47624 | .15621 | .18434 | .84742 | .610 |
| Disclosure | 4.00392 | 68.55743 | .30799 | .30470 | 1.01081 | .442 |
| Attachment | 6.37439 | 102.70605 | .49034 | .45647 | 1.07419 | .383 |
| Costs | 1.06637 | 23.94198 | .08203 | .10641 | .77088 | .690 |

A Cross-tabulation and Chi-square test with participants' family life cycle stage and work status as the independent variables and frequency of contact as the dependent variable were also non-significant.

Similarities Between Close Friends

Hypothesis #2 suggesting significant similarities between friends in marital status, family life cycle stage, and work status was supported for family life cycle stage and work status. Cross-tabulations and Chi-square tests were utilized to test this hypothesis. The results of these tests were all significant, showing a significant pattern in all the tables, but notable similarities between friends were only evidenced in family life cycle stage and work status.

For marital status, as Table 5 shows, married respondents were very likely to have married close friends. Separated or divorced respondents most likely had married friends, but they also had a high percentage of separated or divorced friends. This trend was significant ($\chi^2=13.66$, d.f.=2, $p<.05$). The C value of .23 indicates the pattern in this table is weak, reflecting the high preponderance of married respondents and friends.

The cross-tabulation between respondents' and friends' family life cycle stage was significant ($\chi^2=$

Table 5

Percentages of Marital Status:
Respondents by Friends
(n=252)

| <u>FRIENDS'</u> <u>MARITAL</u> <u>STATUS</u> | Count Row Pct Col Pct | <u>RESPONDENTS' MARITAL STATUS</u> | | Row Total |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | MARRIED | SEP/DIV | |
| SINGLE | 14 77.8 6.1 | 4 22.2 11.8 | 18 7.1 | |
| MARRIED | 175 89.7 75.8 | 16 8.2 47.1 | 191 75.8 | |
| SEP/DIV | 31 68.9 13.4 | 12 26.7 35.3 | 43 17.1 | |
| Column Total | 220 87.3 | 32 12.7 | 252 100.0 | |

Chi-Square
13.66

D.F.
2

Significance
.001

C Statistic
.23

147.15, d.f.=9, $p < .05$). The C value for this table was .60, indicating a strong association between the independent and dependent variables. Except for women who were married without children, respondents were most likely to have friends in the same family life cycle stage. Married women without children either had close friends in a similar life cycle stage or in the next stage. These results are illustrated in Table 6.

There were significant patterns when respondents and friends were compared on work status ($\chi^2=48.50$, d.f.=9, $p < .05$). A C value of .39 indicates an association that is weak to moderate. In looking at work status, women were classified in to four categories: full-time paid work, part-time paid work, homemaker, and other. The other category included a wide variety of work statuses, for example, retired or student. Inspecting the table without including the other category, there does appear to be similarities between respondents and friends in work status. Full-time workers most likely had close friends who participated in paid full-time work. Part-time respondents had close friends who worked full-time, part-time, or were homemakers. Respondents who were homemakers were most likely to have close friends who were also homemakers. These results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 6

Percentages of Life Cycle Stage:
 Respondents by Friends
 (n=262)

RESPONDENTS' STAGE OF FLC

| Count Row Pct Col Pct | MARRIED | CHILDREN 0-12 YRS | CHILDREN 13-20+ AT HOME | CHILDREN 20+ NOT AT HOME | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>FRIENDS'</u> <u>STAGE OF</u> <u>FLC</u> | | | | |
| MARRIED | 8 19.0 38.1 | 9 21.4 14.3 | 20 47.6 18.3 | 5 11.9 7.2 | 42 16.0 |
| CHILDREN 0-12 YRS | 10 16.7 47.6 | 38 63.3 60.3 | 10 16.7 9.2 | 2 3.3 2.9 | 60 22.9 |
| CHILDREN 13-20+ AT HOME | 2 2.3 9.5 | 13 14.8 20.6 | 56 63.6 51.4 | 17 19.3 24.6 | 88 33.6 |
| CHILDREN 20+ NOT AT HOME | 1 1.4 4.8 | 3 4.2 4.8 | 23 31.9 21.1 | 45 62.5 65.2 | 72 27.5 |
| Column Total | 21 8.0 | 63 24.0 | 109 41.6 | 69 26.3 | 262 100.0 |

Chi-Square
147.15

D.F.
9

Significance
.001

C Statistic
.60

Table 7

Percentages of Work Status:
 Respondents by Friends
 (n=271)

| | | <u>RESPONDENTS' WORK STATUS</u> | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------|
| <u>FRIENDS'</u> <u>WORK</u> <u>STATUS</u> | Count | FULL | PART | HOME- | OTHER | Row |
| | Row Pct Col Pct | TIME | TIME | MAKER | | Total |
| FULL | 83 66.4 58.9 | 20 16.0 35.7 | 9 7.2 21.4 | 13 10.4 40.6 | 125 46.1 | |
| PART TIME | 29 46.8 20.6 | 17 27.4 30.4 | 8 12.9 19.0 | 8 12.9 25.0 | 62 22.9 | |
| HOME- MAKER | 21 35.0 14.9 | 14 23.3 25.0 | 22 36.7 52.4 | 3 5.0 9.4 | 60 22.1 | |
| OTHER | 8 33.3 5.7 | 5 20.8 8.9 | 3 12.5 7.1 | 8 23.3 25.0 | 24 8.9 | |
| Column Total | 141 52.0 | 56 20.7 | 42 15.5 | 32 11.8 | 271 100.0 | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Chi-Square</u> | <u>D.F.</u> | <u>Significance</u> | <u>C Statistic</u> |
| 48.50 | 9 | .001 | .39 |

Intimacy and Other Variables

Hypothesis #3 which suggested a positive correlation between the duration of friendship and the level of intimacy was supported. Duration and intimacy were significantly and positively correlated ($r=.12$, $p<.05$). Because the correlation was weak, several ANOVAs were utilized to determine whether other variables were associated with intimacy. Separate ANOVAs with frequency of contact, form of contact, source of friendship, and where the friend lives as the independent variables and intimacy as the dependent variable were conducted. There were significant differences in intimacy by form of contact and where the friend lives.

The Student-Newman-Kuels Procedure was utilized to determine pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level. Respondents whose primary form of contact was by mail had a higher mean intimacy score ($\bar{X}=4.59$) than telephone ($\bar{X}=4.42$) and face-to-face ($\bar{X}=4.32$) contact. (Telephone and face-to-face contact were not significantly different from each other.) Friendships with a person who lived in another state had a significantly higher mean intimacy score ($\bar{X}=4.53$) than for someone who lived in the same city ($\bar{X}=4.34$) or in a different city in the same state ($\bar{X}=4.42$). These latter two were not distinguishable from each other.

Family Life Cycle Stage and Source of Friendship

Hypothesis #4, suggesting a significant relationship between stage of the family life cycle and where the friendship was established, was supported. The pattern in the resulting cross-tabulation was significant ($\chi^2=17.41$, d.f.=9, $p<.05$), but the association between variables was weak ($C=.26$). Table 8 shows a breakdown of where the friendship was established based on stage of the family life cycle. Sources of friendship included personal history (childhood, school), family (husband, children), community (neighborhood, church, recreation), and work. Respondents who were married without children were most likely to have established their closest friendship through personal history or at work. Women with children ages birth to 12 years most likely had established their closest friendship through work or community. Women with an oldest child from 13 to 20 years old and children remaining at home most likely established their closest friendship through community, their family, or work. Women with children over 20 years old (no children at home) established their closest friendship through community or work. Overall, community and work were the primary sources for the closest friendships of adult women.

Table 8

Percentages of Source of Friendship
by Family Life Cycle Stage
(n=241)

| | | <u>FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE</u> | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|
| <u>SOURCE OF FRIENDSHIP</u> | Count | MARRIED | CHILDREN | CHILDREN | CHILDREN | TOTAL |
| | Row Pct Col Pct | | 0-12 YRS | 13-20+ AT HOME | 20+ NOT AT HOME | |
| PREVIOUS HISTORY | 7 15.6 36.8 | 13 28.9 23.2 | 19 42.2 17.9 | 6 13.3 10.0 | 45 18.7 | |
| FAMILY | 2 4.2 10.5 | 10 20.8 17.9 | 29 60.4 27.4 | 7 14.6 11.7 | 48 19.9 | |
| COMMUNITY | 4 5.3 21.1 | 15 20.0 26.8 | 32 42.7 30.2 | 24 32.0 40.0 | 75 31.1 | |
| WORK | 6 8.2 31.6 | 18 24.7 32.1 | 26 35.6 24.5 | 23 31.5 38.3 | 73 30.3 | |
| Column Total | 19 7.9 | 56 23.2 | 106 44.0 | 60 24.9 | 241 100.0 | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Chi-Square</u> | <u>D.F.</u> | <u>Significance</u> | <u>C Statistic</u> |
| 17.41 | 9 | .04 | .26 |

Qualitative Data

There were two open-ended questions at the end of the survey and additional space to provide other information on close friendships. Of the 315 respondents, 306 (97%) responded to the two open-ended questions. In addition, 182 (58%) discussed other aspects of their friendship, or made comments regarding friendships in general.

In responding to the open-ended statement, "My closest friend is someone who..." women had a variety of responses. The most frequent response had to do with listening or talking. They were able to share anything (good and bad) with their closest friend. Closest friends were people who were always there, in good and bad times, and could be counted on to help out at any time. Other attributes of closest friends included being trustworthy/dependable, being non-judgemental and accepting, being understanding, sympathetic, caring, honest, and supportive. Many women noted that closest friends share common interests and values, and many spoke of specific positive characteristics of their closest friend. There were only two instances when negative aspects of the relationship was mentioned.

In response to the question, "What kind of activities do you enjoy participating in with your friend?" participants most often mentioned talking or visiting, or activities that could incorporate talking,

such as sharing food and drink together, walking, and shopping. Other favorite responses included participating in recreational or sporting activities, family activities, hobbies and crafts, and traveling or vacationing.

One last section elicited any other information participants felt was important in understanding the close friendships of women. This was often used by women who responded that they did not have a close friend. Quite often they wrote that their husband or a relative was their closest friend. Others felt they were the kind of people who did not make close friends. A few did not have close friends due to family or work demands.

The women who had close friends often discussed how necessary, special, and unique the relationship was to them. Many discussed the relationship and how it had developed over the years. Quite a few of the respondents commented that it was difficult to single out one close friend--they had more than one friend they considered close. In addition, many women also commented in this section that, in reality, their closest friend was a spouse or relative. It was in this section that issues of conflict were more likely addressed, but again, the incidences of negative attributions to friendships or friends was rare.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Previous studies examining friendships have primarily focused on the structural aspects of friendship relationships. Often friendships have been included in the overall social network of individuals, providing little information on the unique nature of friendship itself. Some researchers have chosen to address networks and/or friendships during adulthood and how they are impacted by the family life cycle (Dickens & Perlman, 1981; Ishii-Kuntz & Seccombe, 1989; Shulman, 1975; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975), but valuable information has been lost because friendship has not been examined closely, or the family life cycle was defined by broad categories.

For women, friendship is a most vital and necessary relationship (Oliker, 1989), but few studies have concentrated on women and their friendships during adulthood. Instead, family and work roles have been the major focus of previous research concerning adult women. Little is known about friendship relationships and how they are associated with the work and family roles of adult women.

One of the goals of this study was to examine the

affective components of friendships of adult women with varying family and work roles. The findings suggest the importance of these affective factors in friendship relationships and the usefulness of the family life cycle approach in studying friendship relationships. These findings, their implications, and their relation to past research will be addressed in this chapter. In addition the limitations of this study and directions for future research will be discussed.

Discussion

Family Life Cycle and Work Association with Friendship. The first hypothesis indicating that aspects of friendship would vary significantly based on the family life cycle stage and work role of the participant was not supported. It was predicted that women with young children and women with children who also participated in paid full-time work would have lower levels of emotional closeness and frequency of contact in their closest friendships. This would be a reflection of the competing demands of family and work roles.

The data indicated that aspects of emotional closeness and frequency of contact did not vary across family life cycle stages. This was not entirely surprising since Stueve and Gerson (1977) found that,

although frequency of contact varied across stages of the life cycle for their male subjects, intimacy did not vary. Data in the current study suggest that women at all stages of the family life cycle are able to have a close non-kin relationship that involves high levels of intimacy, disclosure, attachment, and low levels of relationship costs as they fulfill other demanding adult roles. In addition, women are in frequent contact with their closest friends. This continued high level of contact may be facilitated by women's use of the telephone, a device which men are not as prone to use to stay in contact with their close friends (Oliker, 1989).

The findings of this study seem to contradict Shulman (1975) and Lopata and Barnewolt (1984), who claimed that the role of friend would compete with family and work roles. The results of this study indicate that, at all stages of the family life cycle, close friendships coexist with the family or work roles of women. As one participant in this study stated,

"These friendships have made life more bearable and meaningful. They are the relationships that have rounded out and stabilized my life."

She, and many other women, reflect the findings of Oliker (1989) and Acker, Barry, and Esseveld (1981), who found that close relationships complement other adult

roles and don't necessarily compete with them. They posit that the intimacy needs of women are not met completely in marriage, but through friendship relationships which are more equal, and thus more reciprocal and empathic.

The data in this study support Marks' (1977) contention that people can maintain high levels of involvement in different spheres of their lives. It is suggested that social withdrawal discussed by Johnson and Leslie (1982) and Shulman (1975) does not occur within the inner-most circles of the individual's social network. It is also suggested that these friendship relationships fill needs which other relationships cannot. Two women commented:

"There is time when a good friend is more important than a relative."

"...there is a sense of more freedom of self in friendship than in marital love ties."

As Oliner (1989) suggested, it may also be that high levels of emotional involvement in close friendships can be maintained because friendship relationships are established and sustained so that they do not compete with marital or family commitments--the family is always considered the woman's first priority. As one woman in this study wrote, "Friendships are essential for a happy life--but friends

should not take the place of or interfere with your family." Oliner discovered that family obligations were primary when women considered family and friendship relationships. Oliner stated, "In sum, by explicit or tacit agreement and by unreflective but regular arrangement, women friends subordinate the claims of the most valued friendships to the claims of marriage and family" (p. 119).

Similarities Between Friends. Hypothesis #2 suggested similarities between women and their closest friends in marital status, stage of the family life cycle, and work status. Significant patterns were uncovered in each area. Married women were most likely to have friends who were married. Separated and divorced women most likely had married friends, but they also had a high percentage of separated and divorced friends. This may reflect the findings of Spanier and Thompson (1984). They found that, although a majority of their subjects named intimates who were married, separated people shifted towards naming intimates who were single.

The data do indicate that women are very likely to have a close friend who is in a similar stage of the family life cycle. This pattern was strong. The only exception was for women who were married and had no children. These women had a high percentage of closest

friends in a similar stage, but the majority of their closest friends were women who had children ages 12 and under.

The dynamics of having close friends in dissimilar stages of the family life cycle are reflected in the following comments made by several women in this study.

"She is willing to take time to cultivate a friendship and even though she has no children my kids don't make her uncomfortable. In other words she accepts me for who I am including my family."

"I'm married, she's not. Sometimes that causes some animosity. Although I admire the way she can pick up and go at anytime I would never tell her."

"She also just married and that made a difference in our relationship."

There is additional evidence of similarity in work status between friends. Respondents who worked full-time had a majority of friends who worked full-time as well. Many of them also had close friends who worked part-time. Part-time working participants had close friends among full-time and part-time workers and homemakers. Homemakers had a majority of close friends who were also homemakers.

These findings may be attributed to the time

demands and daily schedules of women, as well as the environment in which women work. For instance, women who work outside the home are most likely in daily contact with other women who work outside the home, and may have similar work schedules. Homemakers work in an environment that more likely puts them in contact with other women who are at home. In addition, similarities of interests and day-to-day life experiences may account for these findings. The data from this study suggest that women are similar in work status to their closest friend, and that work is a significant source of friendships for adult women. These findings reflect that work does indeed influence other spheres of an individual's life, in this case, friendship. As Lowenthal and Haven (1968) suggested, work may provide an environment in which an intimate relationship can be developed.

This study, in addition to many others (Chown, 1981; Dickens & Perlman, 1981; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975), found similarities between friends in gender and age. It was interesting to note that women best friends were more likely to be the same age as the participant (47%) than male best friends (6%). Male best friends were predominantly older (65%), and many were younger (29%), but very few were the same age as the participant (6%).

In respect to gender, participants often commented

on the special nature of their same-sex friendships. One woman commented,

"Although I have close men friends--it just can't be the same. I'm sure the way society raised and taught us how to relate to men and women has a lot to do with it. I can be totally objective about business relationships with either men or women, personal relationships I feel most comfortable with women. What man can relate well to bouts of PMS, water-retention or shopping? I feel like a very liberated, career woman of the 90's, but I'm stuck in the 50's when it comes to relating to other women!"

Another women wrote,

"I think every woman needs female friends. They do understand many things men do not."

Relationships between opposite sex friends were often unclear. Quite often the descriptions of these friendships also sounded like romantic attachments. Some women commented that they had to resolve the romantic or sexual nature of the relationship, while others were still wrestling with these forces. It may be this romantic aspect of female-male friendships which led to the age differences with respect to male close friends.

The similarities between friends in work and family life is best explained by Oliner (1989) who stated, "If indeed women friends are more similar in working hours and life cycle than in economic status and religion, this similarity may correspond to standards of commitment that very strongly emphasize psychological identification and empathy. Women best friends--more than women friends in general or men best friends--may select one another because of similar characteristics, such as marital status, that powerfully shape the experiences of personal life that women best friends talk about. Other similarities that figure less prominently in intimate disclosure may be less important" (p. 89). The similarities in family life and work may make it "easier to understand and participate in the feelings of someone who seems like oneself" (p. 84). For instance, a homemaker with an infant will have an easier time establishing and maintaining a friendship with a woman who also has children of the same age. Their daily schedules will be more similar than if working outside the home, and they will have more similar life experiences to share with each other.

Intimacy in Close Friendships. The third hypothesis, which suggested that friendships of a longer duration would be more intimate, was supported. One woman wrote,

"My friend and I have been friends since we were 10 years old. We have been through the rough years of growing in life and have had each other to turn to when things got rough and also to share the wonderful things of life. There are many types of love--family and friend, spouse and children, but to be a complete person--to me, I need all these loves and I'm so proud, lucky, fortunate to have the friend I've had for 28 years."

The correlation between intimacy and duration of the friendship was weak. The data indicate that friendships of shorter durations can be intimate as well. This is best explained by Oliner (1989) who commented, "The women I interviewed seemed to be quick to identify potential intimates, willing to disclose themselves to these attractive others, and thus able to attach and commit quickly" (p. 161). Several women in this study also explained this association in their remarks.

"I have found that most of these relationships have developed quickly because our personalities "clicked." These friendships have endured over the years whether I see or talk to them daily or only once a year."

"My friend here in my new community is very

dear to me--and feel I've known her longer than 3 years."

Family Life Cycle and Source of Friendship.

Hypothesis #4 suggested that the family life cycle would be associated with where the friendship was established. Stueve and Gerson (1977) found that men at earlier stages of the family life cycle had closest friends they had met during childhood, while men at later stages had close friendships established through work or the neighborhood. The findings in the current study were consistent with those of Stueve and Gerson. Women in the earlier stages of the family life cycle were most likely to have closest friends established through personal history (childhood, school) or work. Women at the later stages of the family life cycle reported that many of their closest friendships were established through work and the community (neighborhood, church, recreation.)

One important finding of this study was that community and the workplace were significant sources of close friends for adult women. Oliner (1989) reported that, for the women in her study, few close friendships were established through husbands, work, or church, but that was not the case in this study. In the current study work and community were reported as the primary or secondary source of close friendships for adult women.

Family (husband, children) and personal history (childhood, school) were also sources, but were not reported as being the primary sources for close friendships.

The Quality of Friendship. In addition to assessing the qualitative aspects of friendship in adulthood, examining similarities between friends, and examining other quantitative aspects of these relationships, this study had an additional goal--to obtain descriptive data to give a more complete picture of these important and unique relationships. The comments received from the participants provided a rich and penetrating portrayal of these relationships.

Although most participants reported having close friends, some did not. Many women stated that their husband or a relative was their closest friend. A few women explained that they were too busy in work and family matters. One woman wrote, "I sometimes think I'm just too busy with the kids and the business to have any friends. But even if I had the time I think it would be a great effort to make friends at this time of my life." This woman was 34, married, and her oldest child was from 13 to 19 years old.

More often participants reflected that they had never been the kind of person to have close friends. A woman reflected this in her statement, "I have never been the kind of person who made close friendships. I

have always been a bit of a loner. Too many people around puts me into overload, although I would not describe myself as shy and I do enjoy parties occasionally."

Although most of the close friends in this sample lived in the same city and were in contact several times a week, usually by telephone, it was interesting how many participants commented that even if contact was not frequent, there was a high degree of closeness in the relationship. Two women express this sentiment:

"When our lives have taken us in different directions for a period of time as it has during years of employment or living miles apart we take up our friendship as if we had seen one another only the day before."

"Even tho [sic] we may not talk or see each other for weeks and months our relationship is strong and we can pick up just where we left off before."

Many women discussed their closest friendship in relationship to time. Their comments illustrated the durability and emotional intensity of these very special relationships. Comments like the following were common:

"Our friendship, like a marriage, has undergone changes as our individual lives have changed. Fortunately, there is an enduring,

mutual glue that holds us together through these changes, something that hasn't changed, that has kept us friends."

and

"We have cried, laughed, cooked, cleaned, camped, etc. thru [sic] the years. We have also delt [sic] with birth, death, sickness in both our families. It's great to have someone who cares!"

Some participants commented about the strains on friendship over time. These strains often were attributed to family and work commitments and being busier in their adult roles. Other comments suggested strains when people develop different interests or grow in different directions. In addition to strains, a few participants discussed negative attributes of friendships. Words such as competitive, gossipy, petty, and vicious were used in these cases.

Oliker (1989) and Johnson and Aries (1983) commented about the talk between women friends. Although this study did not address talk specifically, the descriptions of close friends very often referred to talk as a major factor in the friendship. Being able to share anything and everything with one's friend was an essential component of close friendships. It appears that talk enables women to achieve a high degree of

intimacy through exchanging the valued commodities of friendship--being there for one another, understanding, acceptance, support and encouragement among others. These "commodities" reflect previous values ascribed to friendships by Argyle and Henderson (1984), Johnson and Aries (1983), and Oliner (1989). In this exchange it was vitally important that women were able to share their innermost feelings and true self with a person who was trustworthy and honest, a person who could accept the good and bad, and still care deeply. The corporate values of friendship were reflected by one woman's definition. She wrote, "A friend is one who knows you as you are, understands where you've been, accepts who you've become, and still invites you to grow."

The majority of women spoke of the very special nature of these close friendships. Many commented that close friendships were a "gift" or "blessing." Those women who had these relationships in the past, but were not in such a relationship currently, commented about having a void in their life. The following comments reflect the feelings of many participants:

"I'm happy to have a few of these special people in my life."

and

"In life if we have money and nothing else we are poor. When we have friends we are rich."

For this sample of adult women friendships were very important and special relationships. Friendships played a large part in the lives of these women even when they had family and work commitments as well. Often these friendships seemed to provide a great amount of emotional richness to the lives of the participants, allowing them to reveal their true self to a trusted other. These were indeed vital relationships to the participants of this study.

Limitations

A major limitation of this study was that it had a cross-sectional design, allowing only an examination of the participants at a particular point in time, not as they progressed through time. The true dynamics of friendship relationships and changes in friendship across the family life cycle over time could not be ascertained.

Another limitation of the study was the reliance on self-reported information. Self-reports may not necessarily be factual. Because of the nature of friendship relationships, there may be interactive effects in which respondents are likely to describe themselves in a positive manner or be responding to social scripts of what friendship should be vs. what it

actually is. The richness of the dyadic interaction between friends was also lost by using self-reported data.

The sample size also limited this study. The small cell size in the original cross-tabulations resulted in combining several categories of variables: life cycle stage and source of friendship. Even after combining stages, there were some cells which remained small. This could result in incomplete information regarding the variables studied.

The instruments utilized in this study to measure emotional closeness also contributed to its limitations. The adapted scales from Walker and Thompson (1983) and Walker, Jones, and Martin (1989) may not have adequately addressed the full spectrum of emotional closeness in non-kin friendship relationships. Because the scales had been used primarily with mothers and daughters, they may not have measured the affective aspects of non-kin friendship relationships in a reliable manner.

In addition, there has been no definitive definition of the family life cycle and it is unclear how family forms such as single-parent families fit into current definitions. Adding these single-parent families may have impacted the findings of this study. Nock (1979) suggested that by using the presence or absence of children researchers can include families not

previously included within the family life cycle framework. This was a major factor in defining the family life cycle in this study. However, it may have impacted the results by adding some age-related forces which would not have been as evident by using traditional family types.

For work status, using number of hours worked rather than categorizing work might have allowed more rigorous statistical analysis. It was very beneficial to operationalize work as more than just a dichotomous variable in this study, but data may have been lost by not operationalizing work status by number of hours worked.

Suggestions for Future Research

The data in this study have added to the knowledge about the closest friendships of adult women, but the data have also raised some provocative questions yet to be addressed. Overall, the family life cycle approach was very useful in looking at these relationships. Although the affective nature of friendships did not vary across life cycle stages when women fill various family and work roles, the family life cycle appeared to be associated with the selection of close friends. It would be very helpful to know how the major transitions

of family life (for example, marriage and child bearing) impact close friendships. It has been suggested that during these transitions there may be changes in the close friendships of women (Acker, Barry & Esseveld, 1981; Oliker, 1989).

Although the family life cycle is useful for looking at friendships, there is some evidence that the presence of children more than the life cycle stage accounts for variations in friendship (Nock, 1979; Ishii-Kuntz & Seccombe, 1989). The impact of children on adult relationships is an issue which future research should address.

The close friendships of women with young children was not fully addressed by this study because very few questionnaires were returned from women with children under age 5. Oliker (1989) suggests that these women are constrained in their close friendship choices, often having to interact with children as part of the environment. Further research should address the friendships of women at this point in their lives.

The issue of how marital and family relationships are associated with friendship relationships is another area that needs to be addressed. Oliker's (1989) study, Best Friends and Marriage, resulted in some valuable information, but her sample was relatively small. The dynamics of balancing family commitments and friendships

were often mentioned by the participants in this study although it was not a focus of the study.

The meaning of friendship in the lives of women and men is an additional concern when studying friendships. Many researchers have discussed the differences in friendships between men and women (Dickens & Perlman, 1981; Lowenthal & Haven, 1968; Reisman, 1981; Weiss & Lowenthal, 1975), but this area has not been adequately addressed in previous research. Participants' descriptive information seem to validate the value of intimacy (talk, understanding and feeling/empathy) as discussed by Argyle and Henderson (1984), Johnson and Aries (1983), and Oliner (1989), but more research needs to be conducted on the specific values of friendships for both women and men during adulthood.

The personality of individuals was not a focus of this study, but personality traits and their association with friendship are important variables for future research. Do people have different capacities for intimate relations? How are personality traits associated with friendship selection in adulthood? These are just some of the questions that need to be addressed.

In addition to personality traits, the association between close friends and well-being should be more fully addressed. Does having a close friend contribute

to well-being throughout life, or just during certain periods? Are close friends essential to well-being, or will other support groups (i.e., spouse, relatives) suffice?

Future research should also utilize other methods of investigation. In addition to self-report, observations of friends and reports from both members of the dyad would add a great deal to the understanding of close friendships between adult women.

Summary and Conclusion

The results of this study confirm the sentiment of Oliner (1989) who stated, "I conclude that close friendship deserves recognition as a vital institution of private life" (p. 169). The close friendships described by participants in this study were significant, unique, and durable. The role of friendship endured over time.

The family life cycle provided a useful theoretical framework for examining the close friendships of adult women. Although affective components of these relationships did not appear to be impacted by the family life cycle, structural components of these friendships were. In addition, adding work as a factor which may be associated with close friendships was also beneficial. The fact that women were similar in work

status and many participants established their closest friendship in the workplace was notable.

This study contributes to the literature on adult friendship with the following findings:

(1) Levels of intimacy, disclosure, attachment, relationship costs, and frequency of contact were not associated with women's stage of the family life cycle or work status.

(2) Women were significantly similar to their closest friend in work status and stage of the family life cycle. Although women were not necessarily similar in marital status, significant patterns emerged. All women were most likely to have close friends who were married, but separated or divorced and widowed women tended to include more separated or divorced women among their closest friends.

(3) There was a significant correlation between duration of the friendship and level of intimacy in the relationship.

(4) Where the friendship was established was significantly related to the family life cycle stage of the participant.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: Either a pen or pencil may be used to complete this questionnaire. Most of the questions may be answered by circling the best answer or placing an X in the appropriate box; other questions ask for written answers. Please feel free to write additional comments whenever you wish. There is room at the end of the questionnaire for any additional comments you would like to make.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER.

- A. Some people have friends who they would say are emotionally close to them, while other people do not. Do you have friends you'd say are emotionally close to you?
1. NO (If no, please tell us more about you by skipping to Page 5, Question A)
 2. YES (If yes, please go on to Question B)
- B. How many close friends do you have? _____
- C. Select the friend you are closest to at this point in time. Write his/her initials below. (This friend should not be your spouse or a relative.)
- _____

IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS YOU WILL FIND A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS REGARDING YOU AND THE CLOSE FRIEND YOU IDENTIFIED ABOVE. PLEASE CONSIDER THIS PERSON WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- D. On average, over the period of one year, my closest friend and I are in contact by mail, phone or in person
1. DAILY
 2. ONCE A WEEK
 3. 2 TO 3 TIMES A WEEK
 4. ONCE A MONTH
 5. 2 TO 3 TIMES A MONTH
 6. ONCE A YEAR
 7. 2 TO 3 TIMES A YEAR
 8. LESS THAN ONCE A YEAR

E. What is your most frequent form of contact? (Choose one.)

1. MAIL
2. TELEPHONE
3. FACE TO FACE
4. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

F. My closest friend and I met

1. DURING CHILDHOOD
2. DURING HIGH SCHOOL
3. DURING COLLEGE
4. THROUGH WORK
5. IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
6. THROUGH MY CHILDREN
7. THROUGH CHURCH ACTIVITIES
8. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

G. My closest friend and I have known each other for _____ years.

H. My closest friend is

1. MORE THAN 2 YEARS YOUNGER THAN I AM
2. APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AGE (WITHIN TWO YEARS) AS I AM
3. MORE THAN 2 YEARS OLDER THAN I AM

I. My closest friend lives

1. IN THE SAME CITY
2. IN ANOTHER CITY IN THE SAME STATE
3. IN ANOTHER STATE
4. IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

J. My closest friend is

1. MALE
2. FEMALE

K. My closest friend is

1. CURRENTLY SINGLE/NEVER MARRIED
2. CURRENTLY MARRIED
3. CURRENTLY SEPARATED/DIVORCED
4. CURRENTLY WIDOWED

L. My closest friend has children.

1. NO (If no, skip to Question N)
2. YES (If yes, continue with Question M)

M. The age of my closest friend's oldest child is

1. JUST BORN TO 30 MONTHS OLD
2. 2 1/2 YEARS TO 5 YEARS OLD
3. 6 YEARS TO 12 YEARS OLD
4. 13 YEARS TO 19 YEARS OLD
5. OVER 20 YEARS--AT LEAST ONE CHILD LIVING AT HOME
6. OVER 20 YEARS OLD--NO CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME

N. My closest friend

1. WORKS FULL-TIME OUTSIDE THE HOME
2. WORKS PART-TIME OUTSIDE THE HOME
3. IS A FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER
4. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

IN THIS NEXT SECTION LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND. IN THIS SERIES OF QUESTIONS, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO RATE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR FRIEND.

NEXT TO EACH OF THE STATEMENTS WHICH ARE GIVEN BELOW, PLEASE SPECIFY WHETHER THE STATEMENT IS NOT TRUE, SOMETIMES TRUE, TRUE ABOUT 1/2 THE TIME, MOSTLY TRUE, OR ALWAYS TRUE. THE RATING SCALE IS THE SAME THROUGHOUT AND APPEARS AT THE TOP OF EACH PAGE.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED ITEM.

| NOT TRUE | SOMETIMES TRUE | TRUE ABOUT 1/2 THE TIME | MOSTLY TRUE | ALWAYS TRUE |
|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

 4 We get along well.

YOU MOSTLY GET ALONG WELL WITH YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND, SO YOUR RELATIONSHIP RATES A FOUR (4) ON THIS ITEM. PROCEED THROUGH THE QUESTIONS, ANSWERING THEM FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND. PLEASE TRY TO ANSWER ALL THE ITEMS.

- | NOT TRUE
1 | SOMETIMES
TRUE
2 | TRUE ABOUT
1/2 THE TIME
3 | MOSTLY
TRUE
4 | ALWAYS TRUE
5 | |
|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--|
| _____ | | | | | 1. We can accept each other's criticisms of our faults and mistakes. |
| _____ | | | | | 2. We want to spend time together. |
| _____ | | | | | 3. We're able to share private things face-to-face. |
| _____ | | | | | 4. We're honest with each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 5. Our relationship is a source of irritation to me. |
| _____ | | | | | 6. My friend shows love for me. |
| _____ | | | | | 7. We're dependent on each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 8. I'm lucky to have this friend in my life. |
| _____ | | | | | 9. We anticipate each other's needs. |
| _____ | | | | | 10. My friend cares about the way I feel. |
| _____ | | | | | 11. Our best times are with each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 12. We feel like we're a unit. |
| _____ | | | | | 13. I feel impatient with my friend. |
| _____ | | | | | 14. We respect each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 15. We talk about personal problems. |
| _____ | | | | | 16. Our lives are better because of each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 17. I feel like I want to support my friend. |
| _____ | | | | | 18. When we anticipate being apart our relationship intensifies. |
| _____ | | | | | 19. My friend always makes me feel better. |
| _____ | | | | | 20. My friend can ask me anything. |
| _____ | | | | | 21. There's a great amount of unselfishness in our relationship. |
| _____ | | | | | 22. Because of this relationship I feel I have less time to devote to my family. |

- | NOT TRUE
1 | SOMETIMES
TRUE
2 | TRUE ABOUT
1/2 THE TIME
3 | MOSTLY
TRUE
4 | ALWAYS TRUE
5 | |
|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---|
| _____ | | | | | 23. My friend is important to me. |
| _____ | | | | | 24. We like each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 25. We nurture each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 26. We enjoy the relationship. |
| _____ | | | | | 27. We're emotionally dependent on each other. |
| _____ | | | | | 28. I feel I cannot satisfy my friend. |
| _____ | | | | | 29. My friend always thinks of my best interest. |
| _____ | | | | | 30. We anticipate each other's needs. |
| _____ | | | | | 31. My friend is closer to me than others are. |
| _____ | | | | | 32. Because of this relationship I have less time for myself. |
| _____ | | | | | 33. I'm sure of this relationship. |
| _____ | | | | | 34. We love each other. |

IN THE NEXT SECTION YOU WILL FIND A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

PLEASE FILL IN THE BLANK OR CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER.

A. Your age in years _____

B. Highest level of education you have achieved

1. 6 TO 12 YEARS OF SCHOOL
2. 1 TO 2 YEARS OF COLLEGE
3. 3 TO 4 YEARS OF COLLEGE
4. POST-COLLEGE
5. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

C. Your current marital status

1. CURRENTLY SINGLE/NEVER MARRIED
2. CURRENTLY MARRIED
3. CURRENTLY SEPARATED/DIVORCED
4. CURRENTLY WIDOWED

D. Do you have children?

1. NO (If no, skip to Question F)
2. YES (If yes, continue with Question E)

E. What is the age/status of your oldest child

1. JUST BORN TO 30 MONTHS OLD
2. 2 1/2 TO 5 YEARS OLD
3. 6 TO 12 YEARS OLD
4. 13 TO 19 YEARS OLD
5. OVER 20 YEARS OLD--AT LEAST ONE CHILD LIVING AT HOME
6. OVER 20 YEARS OLD--NO CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME

F. Your work status

1. WORK FULL-TIME OUTSIDE THE HOUSE (30 OR MORE HOURS PER WEEK)
2. WORK PART-TIME OUTSIDE THE HOUSE (LESS THAN 30 HOURS PER WEEK)
3. FULL-TIME HOMEMAKER
4. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

G. Your ethnic background

1. WHITE, NON-HISPANIC
2. WHITE, HISPANIC
3. BLACK, NON-HISPANIC
4. BLACK, HISPANIC
5. AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE
6. ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER

TO GET YOUR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE, PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, PLEASE USE ADDITIONAL PAPER AND ENCLOSE IT WITH THIS BOOKLET.

1. My closest friend is someone who

2. What kind of activities do you enjoy participating in with your friend?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your closest friendship? If so, please use this space for that purpose.

Also, any comments you wish to make which will help in understanding the closest friendships of adult women will be appreciated. You may add them here or attach them on a separate paper.

Your contribution to this effort is very greatly appreciated. If you would like a me to send you a summary of the results of this study, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope. Please DO NOT put your name or address on this questionnaire.

APPENDIX B

September 4, 1990

First name *Last name*
Address
City, *State* *Zip*

Dear Ms. *Last name*:

In addition to the important roles of wife, mother, or employee, women are also friends. Women's friendships are very important relationships, but little is known about the friendships of adult women. You can provide valuable information which will help in more fully understanding the unique nature of women's closest friendships at different points in their adult years.

You are among a small group of women selected from a list of registered voters in Marion County to provide information on your closest friendship. The information you provide will help us understand important friendships more completely. In order for the results to fully represent the feelings of many women, it is important that you complete and return this questionnaire.

All of the information you provide will be confidential. The identification number placed on the questionnaire only allows us to record which questionnaires have been returned. Your name will never be placed on the questionnaire, nor will it be associated with your responses.

If you are interested in receiving a summary of the results, please write your name on the back of the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Please do not place your name on the questionnaire.

We would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Eleanor Goward can be contacted at 585-1418.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Eleanor L. Goward,
Principal Investigator

Anisa Zvonkovic, Ph.D.,
Co-investigator

APPENDIX C

October 1, 1990

First Name *Last Name*
Address
City, *State* *Zip*

Dear Ms. *Last Name*:

About four weeks ago we wrote to you seeking your opinion on the closest friendships of adult women. As of today we have not yet received your completed questionnaire. We know this is a busy time, but completing the questionnaire should only take about ten minutes.

We have undertaken this study because of the belief that more information is needed to fully understand these unique and important relationships.

Ms. *Last Name*, we are writing to you again because of the significance each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this study. Your name was selected through a scientific sampling process in which every woman registered voter in Marion County had an equal chance of being selected. In order for the results of this study to be truly representative of the opinions of women in Marion County it is essential that each person in the sample return their questionnaire.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Eleanor L. Goward
Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Anisa Zvonkovic,
Co-investigator

P.S. Many women have requested a summary of the results. If you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study, please write your name on the back of the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Do not place your name on the questionnaire.