

Family First



I had an idyllic childhood growing up in the Muskoka-Georgian Bay area of Ontario, Canada. Cottage country, it's called, and has been for more than a century.

It's a strange combination of elite consumer society and natural surroundings—million-dollar second (or third or fourth) homes nestled in between water, rock and pines. Expensive power boats skimming past seagulls, loons, and Canada Geese.



My father grew up on Georgian Bay in the 50s and 60s. When he wasn't working in the family business he spent his time fishing and hiking and driving a little aluminum boat around with his brothers.

When the next generation was expanding my dad and his uncles took us to their favourite places. I remember picnics and barbecues, laughter and song, pranks and tears.



We were family first. My older cousins looked out for us while the younger ones played blissfully on the rock and sand. We made up games and drew pictures for each other. We argued and made up, we laughed and cried.

That was my first community.

Loving, sharing, and helping each other.

I try to embody these ideals when I reach out to others. I often do silly or small things—I crochet hats for the neighbourhood children, bring cookies to a friend, send a card. But for me it is about the gesture of showing someone I care.

I have felt the power of these connections and I am blessed to have them in my life. I know not everyone does.

What can you do today or this week to reach out to someone? To tell someone what they mean to you? Take a moment to feel grateful and to share your blessings with others. And share in the comments!

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