



# 3 a.m. Friends

By [Charles Vogl](#)



What's a 3 a.m. friend? My friend Nick taught me the term: it's those people we can call at the most inconvenient time imaginable to ask for help, and they'll welcome our call.

They are the most important people in our lives. It doesn't matter if these are work friends, faith friends, or family relations.

I can call my 3 a.m. friends because I'm confident that they care about me even when they are distracted by a challenge, fulfilling their dreams, or recovering from hard work. I also trust them to respect me and support me even when they see me at my worst.

Do you have 3 a.m. friends? More importantly, are you a 3 a.m. friend for others? I hope your answer to both questions is, "Yes, of course." But that isn't true for all of us, nor is it true all the time.

There are all kinds of fancy ideas and theories about “community.” I don’t pretend to have a mastery of what all possible communities could or should look like. But at the end of the day, communities do one critically important thing: they create relationships. Supportive relationships.

The simplest way to build community is by letting others know that we want to be their 3 a.m. friend. Maybe you are ready to be that 3 a.m. friend, and they don’t know it.

On a number of occasions, friends have surprised me by calling me in the middle of night with a crisis. Perhaps they needed someone to support family members waiting tensely in an emergency room. Perhaps they were torn between a job opportunity and pursuing their dream. Perhaps they only needed to share a secret tearing them up inside.

I’ve come to realize that it is an honor to be trusted in moments like that. When someone shares their vulnerability, they are inviting us to know them in the solemn way.

If you've never tried it, I suggest that, right now, you call the people that you know are your 3 a.m. friends. Thank them for filling this role in your life even if you've never needed to make the call. If there are people that you know whose middle-of-the-night calls you would welcome, consider letting them know how you feel.

While we can talk about “building community” in fancy ways elsewhere, this may be the most important community you will ever have. God knows you need them, and they need you.

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