

# What I Can't Live Without

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Hmmm....What I can't live without. This would be an excellent writing prompt for someone thirty years younger than I am.

My younger self would have had some answers.

I cannot live without love, I might say. I knew then, as I do now, the importance of an emotional bond, mutual understanding, similar sensibilities and interests, a hand to hold, a shoulder to lean on. It is important and wonderful, but I now know I can survive without it.

I cannot live without physical closeness, I would have said. Though sex and love were always close partners in my life, I'd have given the physical aspects their own space. Again, I now know survival is possible.

I cannot live without my family. This still feels true, and I get queasy thinking of losing anyone, but I have survived great loss in the last thirty years. My children have moved away; parents and siblings have died. I've become afraid to think, "This is the worst..." because I've been proven wrong again and again. I approach the idea with dread, but I know I could survive.

I cannot live without my friends, those people that know me, through and through, and are there for me. And yet, in the last thirty years, I've seen friends move away, lose touch, die, distance themselves emotionally or physically...and, broken hearted, I have survived.

I have gained knowledge and experience in the last thirty years. I have become more aware of my strength. It is knowledge that has come at tremendous cost. Still, enduring every loss, I am still able to experience joy in living.

Maybe there is nothing I can't live without.