The Bond

We experience many bonding's in our life with each other. Parents bond with their children. Grandparents, if still alive, bond with their grandchildren. Married couples bond for life. Friends bond, a precious few for life.

And siblings bond. Of all the bonding's, this bond is the most ancient, not just as in siblings are the first humans to be consciously aware of each other, after the birth bond of a parent to their children, it is because they share physical DNA and genetics. This thread of life goes all the way back to the beginning, to their earliest ancestors and to the One Thread that created it all, that massive tapestry we call humanity. It is in their blood.

My sister and I are lucky. Yes, we've had our differences, sometimes resulting in time off or months apart. But separation never persisted. With each reuniting, we grow closer still, carrying on the spirits of our forefathers and mothers, in our case the majority of which goes back to ancient Ireland and the Baltic Country of Lithuania. Lithuania was the first country to declare itself independent from the Soviet Union. Now they are the first European country to defy Chinese economic authoritarianism. Everyone knows everyone wants to be Irish, at least for a day. Most Irish, being Irish, gladly welcome anyone into their clan, assimilating them so that they too become fully Irish like they did with the Vikings. This explains a fairly small but significant amount of Swedish and Norwegian DNA in Irish blood.

I was presented with the current opportunity to care for my sister after she survived yet another near death experience. This time it was viral pneumonia. She is the greatest example in my life of someone who defied and continues to defy truly insurmountable odds in physical health and brain chemistry alteration.

People ask us both many times why the two of us encountered such difficult health issues, though very different in type, still very serious, some potentially terminal. We both, wrongly or rightly blame Hiroshima. Our father was interned in a Japanese prison camp within twenty-five miles of ground zero. Yes, the wind direction on August 6, 1945, carried the fallout from 'Little Boy' directly over them. I recall him talking about how the sky grew very dark mid-day and the 'stench was incredible, something awful, one something never smelled before'. It was with great relief that I discovered a study at Mayo Clinic during one of my stays that examined not only the impact on the children of Japanese that survived Hiroshima, but also the 'volunteers' who unknowingly were exposed to fallout by our government during the phase where we tested nuclear bombs above ground. It concluded that the damage to genetics was limited to the first generation after survivors and that their children had no greater impact than that of their 'normal' generational or general population counterparts. It simply stopped at the first generation, perhaps being the will of God.

My sister and I share the deepest bond of love. In this life we've taken turns participating in the rescue of each other from very bad health issues. At first her friends from my earliest childhood memories were my friends and stayed my friends. As my friends grew into adulthood, my friends became hers. She was my children's all time favorite pull toy. And I am sure she taught them things many parents would frown upon. They ended up being valuable life lessons. She was the one who paid for and gave our kids the opportunity to ski real mountains in the Rockies.

Perhaps this is why it was one of the key elements that made perfect sense to me as to marry my beloved, who was born within just over a month of my sister, who preceded me in life by six and a half years.

Not all siblings share the type of connection my sister and I were gifted and embraced. Some are separated by death. Some are separated by, let's just say, irreconcilable differences.

The cool thing about a sibling though, as long as they are alive, it is never too late. After all, that is what sisters and brothers are for.

Clement