

What a Neighbor I have!

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On any given day, a professor shouted out her rights to a peaceful coexistence. She was telling her sister “she was not going to remain passive before the possibility of (someone) taking control of a space he/she did not own.”

I happen to hear the talk and I was very surprised especially because of the protagonist, who was really angry. However, the goal of these words is not to highlight despicable situations of daily life, but commenting on some other things that honor that old saying “my neighbor is my brother and my closest relative.”

Is there anyone who has not checked the veracity of such saying? I do not think so. If he or she does, he or she is certainly unhappy.

We are lucky any time we have a helping hand by our side. Neighbors help us out several times from unforeseeable situations.

I know women who make home-made sweets and share them with other neighbors living nearby. Others help each other with the cleaning of backyards, babysitting, or the caring of sick people.

A friend of mine told me that a woman named Maria helped her the first months once she moved in to the neighborhood in Altahabana.

Such friendship has gotten stronger over the years. They share food, the telephone and electricity bill.

There are lots of stories. Cubans traditionally exercise solidarity and the neighborhood is that space where such expressions occur on daily basis. Some of the best stories of our life, the ones we treasure the most, take place in the neighborhood.

Having good neighbors is wonderful, but it is not enough. We must cultivate and foster friendship and we should somehow reward that “help” in certain way.

Nonetheless, everything is not perfect. There are some who live distant from the others with behaviors devoid of good manners and decency. They usually listen to noisy music at any time of the day or say shout four-letter words anywhere. In short, they are citizens we rather keep them far away from us.

Here is a short story that tackles subjects such as solidarity and friendship.

One day, a journalist asked a farmer about the secrecy of his corn since his products won every year the best product award. The farmer confessed his secret: I share my seeds with my neighbors.

“Why do you share your best corn seeds with your neighbors if you participate in the same contest every year?”

“Well...The wind carries the corn pollen from land to land. If my neighbors cultivate their corn with lower seed quality, the pollination would ruin the quality of mine. If I am going to sow good corn, I need to help my neighbors their seeds.”

“The same happens with other life situations. If you pretend to succeed, you should help others to succeed as well. Those who want to live well need to help others to live well too. You can find you own comfort by leading others to find theirs.”

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