

MY BEST FRIEND

The term “my best friend” gets thrown around a lot. Recently, I have heard of “my newest best friend.” I think being someone’s best friend is serious business. I also think when you are my age, you are unlikely to acquire new best friends. You are lucky to find any kind of real friend—lots of acquaintances, people with whom you might share similar interests, but a close friend, not too likely.

My best friend happens to be Bob Epstein. We go back to 1941, when we were in 9AR in junior high school. We weren’t best friends then. Bob had gone to PS 39, and I had gone to PS 62. We came to JHS 52 with different groups of friends. At the time, my best friend was Larry Wilson who lived in the house next to mine. He was a month younger than me. From the time we were 6 or 7, we hung around together. We weren’t in the same class. Children were tracked, and I was in the “1” class, and Larry was in the “3” class. Early on, the Board of Education gave kids either a superiority, or an inferiority, feeling. I was therefore supposed to be smarter than Larry. I was also older and taller. But Larry had a mother and a father and a grandfather, and I only had a mother. We were about the same when we played ball. We began drifting apart in junior high school, and certainly in high school.