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# Opportunities to Deepen Cross-Racial Friendships

*A Resource for Moving Beyond Superficial Relationships*  
by Austin Channing

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We often talk about the importance of forming cross-racial friendships, but we don't often talk about the difficulties of crossing cultures. If we want to develop healthy, long-lasting friendships across racial lines, we need to first acknowledge the complexities and challenges of those friendships. One story that's inspired me, particularly when it comes to cross-cultural relationships, is found in Exodus 2, where three women—Miriam, Jochebed, and Pharaoh's daughter—worked together to save the life of baby Moses.



**1. Drawn together by a common cause.**

The connection between these women was born of a determination to resist an unjust law. Some friendships are the result of a chance meeting, others a purposeful introduction. The beginnings of this friendship reveal the depth a friendship can reach when it's founded on a shared commitment to make the world better.



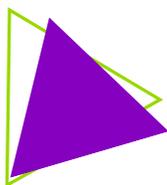
**2. They treated one another as equals.**

Pharaoh's daughter didn't chide, disrespect, or humiliate the women standing before her. She resisted treating them as inferiors. Similarly, Miriam and Jochebed didn't express disdain for the princess, seeing her only as a representation of the empire. Instead the slave women treat her as the compassionate, self-willed woman she was proving herself to be. These women show us the importance of mutual respect.



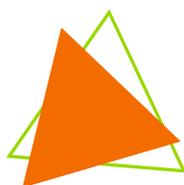
**3. The marginalized women led.**

The powerful, privileged princess proved she was listening to Miriam by confirming the slave girl's strategy. Pharaoh's daughter didn't swoop in with her best-laid plans, assuming she should determine the best plan. Nothing stalls a cross-cultural friendship faster than an inability to release power. On the other hand, nothing grows a cross-cultural friendship like mutual respect and humility.



**4. They recognized their differences.**

Pharaoh's daughter did add to the plan, but what she added was costly only to herself: she decided to pay Jochebed. I like to think the princess gave out of her abundance in recognition of their different life experiences. The princess couldn't upset the system by herself, but she could undermine it by giving the family a wage. In our friendships, we must create space for acknowledging the disparities that may exist between us, and seek to ease that pain.



**5. The relationship was mutually beneficial and sacrificial.**

This risky relationship worked because each of the women benefited and sacrificed. Jochebed and Miriam were able to keep their family together. Yet eventually they had to release the child to the princess. The princess let the family leave, trusting they would bring the child back to her. I wonder if the princess faced severe backlash from her father and family. Our friendships require us to step out in faith and make the relationships work. Mutuality is key.

*by Austin Channing*