

The Power of Simple Parties

I recently attended one of the best birthday parties I can recall. What's odd is how this party stood out to me at all.

It had no bumping music, no fancy lights. No one was drunk or high or gorging on fine food. No one was grilling food, dancing, hanging around a pool, hanging around a bonfire. The party had few of the trappings of a party at all. It was just six friends standing around in the kitchen area of a small, sparsely decorated apartment in the middle of the day.

It was quiet. It was modest. It was simple. But it was great.

No one needed stimulation aside from interaction with the minds and hearts around the kitchen. Everyone shared values and experiences which made it natural and easy for us to fall into deep, life-giving, and useful conversation (as well as shared humor and curiosity).

The party was great because it gave a reason and a sanction for a gathering of six people who might otherwise make all kinds of excuses to themselves about why they shouldn't make time to meet. It brought together people who need to do this sort of thing more often.

Most people don't host parties because they set their expectations too high - expectations for the kind of parties we all see in the movies. Those that can meet their own high expectations can often produce extravaganzas which have little soul or love in them. This party showed to me that there is a third way.

Find the good occasions (like birthdays) that exist and use them as an excuse to just bring good people together. It might just be enough, and the trappings will sort themselves out.