

MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS THAT LAST A
LIFETIME IN THIS FAST PACED WORLD!



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Introduction

We cannot do without friends. But we cannot do with the wrong friends either.

We come into this world with several relationships thrust upon us. Friendships are God's way of allowing us to choose our own people that we remain close with. With friendships, we have a choice. We must make the best use of it.

There are two sides to this story. On one hand, some people think they always land with the wrong people. On the other hand, there are people who think they can never make friends.

Are any of these your story? Read this sensitively written eBook to see how you can begin rating high on the Friend-o-meter.

Chapter 1:

Are You Really Ready for More Friends?

Summary

Friendship gives you a lot, but it also demands a few things from you.

Are You Really Ready for More Friends

Every person that thinks about having more friends must first find the answer to this question. If you are thinking you must really have more people to hang around with, you have to think whether you can afford to be with them. There are various things that may not make things conducive for you. These are the few aspects you have to really think about first.

Will you be able to spend time with them?

The first and the most important investment you have to make in any friendship is time. You have to be there to start and nurture the relationship. Your business or other things might run on automation, friendships and relationships don't. If your current schedule does not permit you time to even have two proper meals a day, how would you build a friendship? In such a case, you have to free up some time first.

Is your personality ready?

Yes, you have to prepare yourself, or rather, you have to prepare the person you are so that you can win more friendships. Now what does that mean? In some cases, your mind is ready to make friends, but your personality isn't. Maybe you have some traits because of which you lost some friendships before. Maybe you are too pushy or too complacent. Maybe you didn't care. You have to work out these issues first. You have to make sure that the problems that crept in your previous friendships don't creep in your new ones.

Is your mind ready?

If you want to make new friends, you have to be mentally prepared. You have to be ready to feel happy, care and be cared for, feel emotional and such. You have to be ready to open up your mind. If you have a secret, you will probably have to tell it to your friend one day. Are you mentally prepared for all of that? Make sure you are before allowing new people to enter into your mental space.

Are you ready for the commitment?

All right, these are not romantic relationships, but even friendships take some kind of commitment, which is just as solid as the romantic ones. You have to commit to be there for your friend. You have to be as good a friend to them as you expect them to be there for you. You

have to make absolutely certain you will do what it takes to retain your friendships.

Chapter 2:

Where to Look for Friends Suitable to Your Tastes

Summary

Birds of a feather flock together. Friends do too. If you can find people of like interests to be with, you are sure to be with a long time.

Where to Look for Friends Suitable to Your Tastes

God can come to you in any form at any time. We don't realize when or how He comes. The same is with friends. Friends are all around us. We just don't realize who they are. Most times, we lose potential friendships just because we are too preoccupied with ourselves. Sometimes, we do not even venture out to find where these potential friends are.

The truth is, friends are everywhere. They are meeting you all the time but there are some reservations that are keeping you from getting closer to them. Since now you have decided to find permanent friends, you can actually set out to look for them. Where do you find them then? Everywhere, yes, but where exactly?

Let us see how easy it is to find the friends you are looking for.

Join a Club or a Class

So your busy schedule does not allow you to meet more people apart from those that are working with you? Well, then use your weekends to the hilt. Join a club or a class for a subject that really interests you. Like French? Join a French speaking class. Like tennis? Join a club and play tennis there. It could be anything you like; there's always a club or a class for that. People of all types are found in such places and since you are doing something together, the atmosphere is very conducive to friendships.

The best part of finding friends through these avenues is that these people are also interested in the same things as you are. So you already have something to talk about if an opportunity for conversation posed itself. If you are in a cooking class, you are going to start talking about cooking with others. This breaks the ice and slowly the conversation can veer toward other things.

The teachers or coaches in such places are already trained on how to foster friendships. They even do this from a business perspective. They are told that if they make people feel more comfortable in the class or the club, they are likelier to bring other people to join. Hence, they make sure everyone gets to know the other.

Be Active in the Church

No one asks you questions about why you are doing something for the church. In fact, it is looked upon as a very good thing. And the great bonus is that you can make good friends here. People who attend masses are people of faith and when they see you doing things for the institution, they are going to like you and try to get in touch with you. People who are active in church get more invitations to weddings and other celebrations, which is a great way to meet new people who could be friends.

Attend Social Events

Got invited to a function that you plan on skipping? Don't do that. Go wherever you are invited. These are the places where some people know you and where you have a chance to get introduced to a lot more unknown people. Next time you get an invite, don't turn it down casually.

Make Friends Online

There are hundreds of social networking sites where you can make friends. [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), [Friendster](#) are just some names that come to mind. These are places where you can find likeminded people and communicate with them. You can build groups, message them directly, chat with them and maybe even meet them personally if it is possible and if you find they are right for you. There are some drawbacks here, such as you cannot meet the people in their flesh and blood at least initially and that you need to have some knowledge of using the Internet. However, this is the new trend about people meeting new people and making friends.

Chapter 3:

Breaking the Ice with New People – The First Step to a Potential
Friendship

Summary

Now, you meet new people. Bu, how do you start communicating with them?

Breaking the Ice with New People – The First Step to a Potential Friendship

The next step in making friends is most crucial. You have begun meeting people, actually, you do see a lot of people with your common interests all around you. Probably each and every one of them is a potential future friend. But, now the task is upon you to approach them. You have to break the ice with them, so to speak.

This is a difficult job, more so when you consider that the first impression is the only impression that matters. If you set out on a wrong foot, it isn't going to bode well.

Be relaxed. First of all, don't take this so seriously. Think about what happens if your friendship does strike a chord. You are going to share the most intimate details with each other, probably. You are going to be very comfortable hanging out with each other. Picture that in your mind. Now, that makes you much more confident about meeting this person, doesn't it?

First of all, don't approach the person at the wrong time. If you see them doing something else, it's not the right time. But if they are waiting alone, or even if they are with a group of friends that they are comfortable with, it could be a good time to approach them.

Be very, very casual. Don't pretend to do anything, just be what you are. Ask if you can join them first, and you will be almost certainly invited. Don't plan on any speech in advance. Let it just flow. The best way to open a conversation is to give just one casual comment about what's happening. "The class went too long, didn't it?", "It's a good time of the year, I think", "Did you agree with that?", etc. are good openers. Don't begin with impertinent questions like, "Why are you here?" and "Who are you waiting for?" Be tactful. Be general. Don't speak about yourself too much.

This question is just a feeler. When you ask your initial question, the person will almost certainly respond, but it is the weight of the answer that should be your deciding factor. Is the answer short, almost to the point of snappy? That means the person doesn't appreciate your presence. Move elsewhere. Is the answer friendly, but not interested? That means the person has something else in their mind rather than talking with you at the moment. Politely excuse yourself and wait for another time. Is the person very enthusiastic about you being

there and gives you a very detailed answer, asking some questions of their own? You have it made then, indulge in great conversation with them.

When you meet a new person, your nervousness lasts just one question. Once you have made your initial comment, the response sets you immediately at ease, whether it is positive or negative. If it is positive, you become more comfortable speaking with that person and if it is negative, you can easily excuse yourself and look for friends elsewhere. Hence, it is no big deal really. Breaking the ice is not much of a problem.

Chapter 4:

Watering the Sapling of Your Friendship Fern

Summary

Friendship, like a delicate plant, needs to be nurtured.

Watering the Sapling of Your Friendship Fern

The first few days of your new friendship will actually decide whether your friendship will last forever or will wither away. Now, friendships might happen automatically, but if you want them to last forever, you have to chip in some efforts.

It is much like a potted sapling. It is very small and delicate at the moment. You have to water it, give it proper fertilizer, place it in gentle sunshine, etc. so that it thrives.

Even with friendship, you have to do some things. This begins with your first meeting with the person itself, the 'breaking the ice' part. Once you have found a person you like, make sure that you open up an avenue to meet them again. If it is a class or club, you don't have to worry, because you know they will be there again. But sometimes friendships happen in the strangest of places, while waiting for a bus, for example. When you meet people in such uncertain places, you could close the conversation by giving your name. They will likely reciprocate by giving theirs. Then, give them your number or ask if they would like to meet you somewhere, like in a coffee shop, for some casual banter. Probably set this up for the weekend. This is an important step, because here is where their genuine interest in you is shown along.

Even if you are meeting someone at a regular place, make sure you don't come on too heavily on them. Let some 'chance' conversations happen between you, and opportunities to meet will occur. Like, you might accompany on their way home or even take a detour for a bite somewhere.

Lasting friendships are those that start out on the right foot. We have already mentioned that, but this will be important throughout your initial days. It is good manners to listen. Keep everything that they say in mind. Remember their name, what they do, where they live, the people that they talk about, etc. You may not realize how important a good memory is for a lasting friendship. If you remember things about them during your successive visits, things are going to be much better.

Don't sell yourself too much. You might be zealous in making this person like you, but don't give out too much information about yourself. Let your topics flow. Speak in relation to what they are

speaking. Don't create topics from the wind, just as fillers. That makes the outing boring.

Also, don't be too pushy at first. If you have met somewhere, don't be too greedy for another outing very soon. Get the right feeling from them first. If they are eager to meet you again, plan on a nearer date. Or best, ask them to suggest when you would meet next. You will really have it made if you ask them to bring their other friends along the next time. That makes it concrete in their mind that you like them for what they are.

Chapter 5:

Taking Your Friendship to New Levels

Summary

Now that your friendship is almost established, it is time to try out new things.

Taking Your Friendship to New Levels

The one thing that really reinforces friendships, or any relationships for that matter, is when you do things together. Why are most people closest to their families? Because they have shared common experiences. They have done special things together, even if it is just a Thanksgiving dinner. They have things in common they talk about, they have inside jokes, they have visited places together. They have wept and cried together.

You will find that as you share more experiences with people, you grow closer to them. It certainly works in friendships too. Haven't you heard of the phrase – friends through thick and thin?

Now that you have somewhat grown to know each other better, you should try out these 'new' shared experiences to do together. The rule of the thumb is that there is always something in common between two people, however distant they might seem on the outside. It could be anything – love for eating, love for movies, love for golf. Your initial conversations will tell you what you like to do. Then you can make plans for it. If you like traveling, try to make a plan for visiting a nearby holiday place, probably trek there if you like. It is always interesting if you can get other people to join you, because you might feel more comfortable in company.

Plan out these new things more often. If there's a new eatery in town that everyone is talking about, go check it out. You have to buy new clothes for yourself, ask them to accompany you to the mall. You get some good news? Share it with them. You will find you always get reciprocation for such acts. These short times of togetherness will also give you a great time to converse with each other and get to know each other better.

Remember that reciprocation is important here. If you invite your new friend for something, they must invite you too. If they do it first, you have to reciprocate. If either one does not reciprocate, something is amiss. You may have to work more at getting to know each other. Maybe do smaller things first, like having a dinner together, and then go for bigger things. If the reciprocation part flounders, the thing that is probably missing is that you are trying too hard. Go slower.

Chapter 6:

The More, the Merrier

Summary

Romance blossoms in solitude; friendship blossoms in company.

The More, the Merrier

When you are looking at making friends, one of the thumb rules that apply is that you don't have to focus on just one person. That is true with any relation anyway. Even if you are into a romantic relationship where most people would think that it is only the other person that should really matter, the fact is that you have to think about several other people too. You have to think about the relations of your lover, for example. You have to think about the family that you might plan together. So, the main point is that – there are always other people involved, unless you are shipwrecked on an island and spend your whole life there.

This principle also applies to friendships. When you are looking at making new friends, you must not focus on just your friend. You must also think about the friends of your friend. Don't expect them to leave their old friends just because they have met you and you are apparently doing fun things together. Don't leave your own other friends too. Even if your new friend says that they haven't had as good a time with anyone else as they have had with you, they don't really mean it. They still love their old friends a lot and would love to be with them at the drop of a hat.

That is why the best approach would be to involve these people. Ask your friend to bring their other friends sometimes; plan collective outings, for example. If they are speaking a lot about someone, say that you would like to meet that person. That achieves two things. You create an impression of being a better person in the eyes of your friend and you have a chance of meeting someone new, which could mean another potential friendship.

A good idea is to throw a celebratory party for your friendship. Call all your friends over, both of you. It could be a great way of getting to know everyone else. You will become a hit with the "other" group and will get a chance of many more potential friendships during the small party that you organize. Sooner than you think, you will be getting invited to the things that they organize.

Chapter 7:

Being a Friend Yourself

Summary

Can you expect anyone to be friendly to you without being a friend to them first?

Being a Friend Yourself

Friendship – or any human relationship for that matter – is a matter of reciprocation. You only get as good as you give. *Do unto others as you would like to be done unto yourself.* This is very apt when it comes to fostering friendships.

So, if you want to be a friend for someone, it is absolutely vital that you are a friend to them too. Suppose your friend wishes to go for a movie that you don't want to go. Most people would refuse that outright. But that's not done! Wouldn't you want your friend to accompany you for a movie that you want to watch, even if they didn't? Your friend wishes to go shopping. You don't go. But then, isn't it unfair to expect them to come on a ride with you when they don't want to?

We are built like that – selfishness is inherent in all of us to an extent. But that doesn't work if you are trying to build a friendship. If you want your friend to be there for you, you have to be there for them.

If you see them weeping, you have to ask what's bothering them. If you don't, you must not expect their shoulder to lean on when you are down in the dumps.

Being attentive to their needs is an important part of the friendship game. Your friends won't tell you everything. There are times when they will expect you to understand more than words. At such times, you are a good friend if you can guess what's going on in their mind and work accordingly. This happens over time as you start understanding them in a better way. Sometimes, you can act on a quirk – you see something in a store that you know your friend will like, and you buy it for them. When you give this to them, they will be pleased not because you bought something for them but because you remembered what their special tastes are.

Conversation with friends is considered the best form of conversation because you can talk unbridled about anything you want. But there are some lines to draw here too. Your talk should not be unnecessarily demeaning to them. Yes, you can criticize them, and in fact friends expect your criticism, but if you are playing them down all the time, you should not expect them to pat your shoulder often too.

You may have talents that your friend doesn't have. But you can be a true friend to them only if you keep these prejudices away. Always bear in mind that your friend has several talents that you don't have.

If you want to be treated in a particular way, treat others in the same way first. This is the law of nature; it always works.

Chapter 8:

Making Your Friendship Permanent

Summary

Friendships should be lasting, or they aren't friendships at all.

Making Your Friendship Permanent

Friends are those who last with you forever; those who sail by are just acquaintances.

Quite often it happens that we have a change in our circumstances and lose our “friends”. It happens when we graduate from college and go into the outside world, leave a workplace, or move to a different city. But, think about it – if you lost these people, were they really friends in the first place?

No, they weren’t. They were merely acquaintances. And, judging in the same coin, if you let these friends slip away, were you a true friend to them? No, you weren’t. For what kind of a friend is one who lets great relationships wither just for no reason?

It is not necessarily a change of circumstances that can make this happen. You lose friends for no apparent reason whatsoever. People call it a part of the growing up process. But then, this is not how friendships must be at all.

You have to make sure your friendships last forever.

Even if you move away, you must send that one cherished letter, card or email their way which will bring back warm memories in the minds of both of you. Nowadays, things are made so much simple with all the online options we have. We actually don’t have any excuse for drifting apart.

Along the way, you will meet a lot of new people. Many of these people will seem more fascinating to you, but does that mean that you should lose out on the people that you have with you? Should you ever outgrow your friends? Well, if you do that, consider this – how would you feel if your best friend joins a new class and starts hanging out with those guys, forgetting you?

But, friendship actually goes beyond all that. True friendship is above just meeting and hanging out. It is about keeping each other in mind. Even if you have physically drifted apart, do you keep thinking of your friends? Will you criticize them in front of other people for things you did not like about them? Does their birthday still make you excited? These are parameters of lasting friendships.

And all that depends on the things you do with your friends right now. It depends on what you share with them. It depends on how much you are there for each other. The closer you are right now, the more difficult it will be for you to drift apart. The more difficult it will be for you to "outgrow" each other. Don't keep back from expressing yourself. If you like something that your friend has cooked, compliment them on that openly. If tomorrow you do go apart, they will remember you whenever they cook that particular dish again. Probably they will remember you so much that they will call you and you might meet each other again. If just a single compliment can rekindle the flame of a lost friendship, just think how much an entire body of conversation can do to make friendships everlasting.

Chapter 9:

Where Lines Are Drawn Even in the Closest of Friendships

Summary

However much intimate a friendship might be, there are always things that you must not do or must not say.

Where Lines Are Drawn Even in the Closest of Friendships

Everything is fair in love and war.

Not in friendship.

Even in the closest of friendships, there are things that must not be said, things that must not be done. Yes, friendships are not absolute. There are countless instances of friends hurting each other to such an extent that they become sworn enemies. Why does that happen? That happens because friendships are not completely forgiving, as they are made out to be. The person who is best friends with you right now may not want to see your face someday.

Did that happen because the friendship was weak to begin with? No. It happens more because you did not pay attention to one important detail – friendships need to be mutual. You have to give as much as you receive.

You forgot the law of reciprocation that works here. You forgot that friendship is all about reciprocating. It is all about first giving what you expect to receive.

There are some things that must be absolutely not done.

Being Overly Possessive

Never must you think that your friends are your property. You cannot play with them or their emotions any way that you want. They are also humans with feelings and desires just like you. They want to have their own way sometimes, even if they are quite accommodating in nature. If you become very possessive about your friends and make a face when they hang out with other people or start telling them what they must do and what they must not do.

Being Very Critical

Everyone accepts some amount of criticism from their friends, but things start souring when these criticisms go overboard. Unwarranted criticisms are not appreciated. If you wish to tell your friend to improve upon something, wait for the right occasion and broach the subject very cautiously, asking your friend to take what you are telling

for what it is and that you are not demeaning them. In the same way, accept their criticism too. However, if you are too critical of your friends, you might lose them forever.

Not Honoring Promises

There are various promises that friends make, the simplest of which could be meeting at a particular time somewhere. Being stood up at such points is not acceptable without genuine reason. Friends are supposed to be frank with each other and hence there should not be such occasions at all. If you cannot honor something you told a friend, be clear about it and your friend will surely understand.

Chapter 10:

Ensuring that You Remain a Friend-Maker Forever

Summary

Some people attract friends like magnets attract iron filings. What do they have that others don't?

Ensure that You Remain a Friend-Maker Forever

To an extent, making friends is a cyclic process. If you have friends, they will introduce you to more people and you can make more friends. You can think about it this way too – when you move around with a lot of people, other people get a good impression about you as a person and they think of hanging around with you too. On the other hand, if you stay friendless, people might be apprehensive about approaching you. They might think you don't like hanging around with people much.

So, one way that you can ensure to keep making friends is to cling on to the people you move with, i.e. your existing friends. We spoke a while ago about outgrowing friends. This is something that is very detrimental in making new friends. If you forget your past friends, you aren't going to have your current crop of friends for long too.

If you want to make sure that you stay a friend-maker forever, you have to work on your personality too. Throughout your life, you are learning and discovering new things about yourself. You learn this mostly from the people you meet. You understand what people like about you and what they don't. If you take their criticism in the right spirit and keep improving yourself, you are improving your chances of staying a friend-maker. You are improving yourself as a person, and that goes a long way in making friends.

Always keep mingling with new people, don't let any social opportunities pass you by and be cheerful whenever you meet anyone new. This is what brings more people into your friend circle.

But remember one very important thing – one thing which if you forget you will be a lesser person – when you get new friends, don't let your old friends slip by. Hang out with everyone; be a sociable person and you will find you will never run out of good people who you can call your friends.

Conclusion

You have it here then, everything you need to know about making friends... right from meeting them for the first time to keeping them with you forever.

...And about making new friends while still keeping your old ones.

Have fun, enjoy life!!!