



Friends ...

Friends are a very integral part of one's life. It is Friendship that is said to be one of the strongest bond in human relation and a relationship of a lifetime. So it's important we nourish and treasure friendship.

If you don't wanna lose your friends and want to treasure them in your life, you can just follow some simple rules mentioned below:

- **Permit Your Friends To Be Themselves:** Accept them as they are. Accept each one's imperfections – and individuality – and don't feel threatened if their opinions and tastes sometimes differ from yours. Is your attitude to friendship one that seeks to make your friends more like you? What is the danger in this?
- **Respect Their Feelings:** We are entitled to our private feelings and thoughts. Friends who try to invade their inner feelings of one another risk destroying the relationship. Give each other space – only in the freedom of our own space can we grow. Is it right to demand all of your friend's time and space?
- **Be Ready To Give And To Receive:** Be eager to help and able to ask for help as well. But don't be over-demanding. Is it fair that the relationship becomes one-sided all the time – is the same person always doing all the giving? Are you aware of when you are being used?
- **Make Your Advice Constructive:** When a friend needs to talk, listen without interruption. If advice is asked for, be positive and supportive. Do you realise the need of others for someone to listen to them?
- **Be Loyal:** Loyalty is faithfulness. It means "being with" your friend in bad times as well as good. It means honouring confidence. It means neither dishonouring a friend in their absence nor allowing others to do so.
- **Give Praise and Encouragement:** Tell your friends what you like about them, how thankful you are for their presence in your life. Delight in their talents, applaud their success. Praise and encouragement lead to new growth and strength of relationship. Can you be pleased about the success of a friend?
- **Be Honest:** Open communication is of the essence of friendship. Express your feelings, good and bad instead of bottling up your anger or anxiety. Clearing the air helps a relationship to grow. But be aware of what is better left unsaid. Are you allowed to show your true feelings in a friendship?
- **Treat Friends As Equals:** In friendship there is no number one, no room for showing off how smart and successful you are, for envy, for feeling superior or inferior. Do you know what it is like to be number 2 in a friendship?

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- **Trust your Friends:** Make the effort to believe in the inherent goodness of your friends. We live in a messy, imperfect world made up of imperfect people. Do you think a friendship could exist without trust? Do you make an effort to believe in the intrinsic goodness of friends?
- **Be willing to Risk:** How and what do we risk in a friendship? Unless we dare to love others, we condemn ourselves to a sterile life.



Meditation on meeting a friend

(leader to read each line slowly – with a significant gap between each instruction)

- Relax, Breathe, Listen to your heartbeat, Allow your muscles to relax
- Leave the atmosphere of this room and go somewhere you'd like to be with a friend
- Image the scene. Is it country or city, beach or forest? What's it like?
- Are there other people around you? How many?
- What's the weather like?
- OK you are with your friend. How did you meet that person? How did you greet them?
- Look at their features, their colouring, what are they wearing?
- What do you feel inside?
- What do you do?
- Who do you share?
- In your mind – just be with that person in whatever way you want.
- Take time to just be and just share that time with each other.

silence

- Now it's time to part.
- How do you say goodbye?
- What's your last visual image of that person?
- Where are you and how do you feel now?
- Now, when you are ready, slowly, come back to the presence of this room, remaining relaxed
- Open your eyes.