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Final Research Paper

To my dearest friend,

I know that you are worried about having to move away from home and it is scary to be the new person in town. However, you must look at this as an opportunity to meet new people and to make wonderful new friends. The world today often underestimates the importance of friendship. C.S. Lewis even called friendship “the least natural of loves” because it is not something that we necessarily need; it presents no biological purpose.[[1]](#footnote-1) However, friendships affect your happiness and your success as well as your metal and physical health. That is why it is so important to find people who you can bond with so that what starts as companionship can transform into a life-long friendship.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In one of my classes this past semester, I learned about living a good human life and how friendship applies to *eudaimonia,* or human flourishing.[[3]](#footnote-3) In everything we do, there are ends which we are trying to achieve. Aristotle says that while there are many ends, there is one end that is greater than all the rest. In order to live a good human life and to achieve the “best good”, we must live virtuously.[[4]](#footnote-4) However, Aristotle also says that to be happy, one needs other goods in their life as well; one of which is having friends. This is because having friends gives you more opportunities for virtuous activities which bring you closer to achieving a good human life.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Not all friendships are created equal. In order to live a good human life not only do you need friends, but the friendships you are forming must be *complete* friendships. According to Aristotle, there are three types of friendships one can form: utility, pleasure, and complete friendships. Friendships based on utility and pleasure are not good friendships because they are based on whether someone is useful or pleasurable to you.[[6]](#footnote-6) Such friendships have nothing to do with “reciprocated goodwill” which is what a good friendship is all about.[[7]](#footnote-7) In contrast, a complete friendship is built on what virtues the two people have in common. Though they take time to form, complete friendships last much longer than any other friendship and they make life better in the long run.[[8]](#footnote-8) Once you have made some friends, the key is to conduct those friendships well in order to maintain them.

Many people around the world are skeptical about friendships between men and women. They do not believe that the two can be in a stable, non-romantic relationship for very long. However, others, mainly young people, claim that they have many close friends of the opposite sex. While men and women lived very different lives up until several decades ago, today they are entering each other’s worlds and “…learning to relate to each other as people primarily, not sex objects”.[[9]](#footnote-9) Friendships between men and women can be very valuable because *one* can understand things the other cannot, and vice versa; different perspectives can be shared. Though, to conduct this type of friendship well, both persons involved must set boundaries for their relationship. These limits help avoid confusion and allow for the friendship to blossom without the fear of destruction from romantic feelings.[[10]](#footnote-10) This is something important to think about when making your new friends.

According to Aristotle, in order for friendships to be maintained, friends must share their lives with one another. This can be done by participating in activities together. In this day and age, there are many different ways to meet new people; one of which is online. As someone who enjoys playing video games, you may be interested to know that friendships made online can still meet the standards that Aristotle presents. It is true that the activities conducted by friends do not need to be physical or even done in person. In fact, as time is spent gaming together, friendships that started online can further grow into offline friendships.[[11]](#footnote-11) While this method of making friends is far from what Aristotle was familiar with, it is the new reality of our world today and should be embraced as another means for people to meet one another.

Another important factor in maintaining successful friendships is befriending the right kinds of people; those who want the best for you. Friends play an important role in a person’s life because they are the people who have the most influence over you. It has also been proved that friendships affect a person’s health, both mental and physical, so the people you surround yourself with should be those who encourage you to be your best self and who make you feel good. The more high-quality social interactions you have, the better your health will be, as well as your life.[[12]](#footnote-12) These types of friendships are also more likely to last longer because they will be complete friendships; both parties want what is best for the other.

Even with all of this information, I know that making friends in a new place can seem scary, but I also know that you can do it. The most important thing is that you be yourself so that you can find people who can really connect with you. Those are the people who will end up being your friends for life. Write me back as soon as you can because I cannot wait to hear all about the amazing friends you are sure to make!

Your friend,

Stella

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1. Lewis, 1960, pg. 87-88 & 94 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Lewis, 1960, pg. 96 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Aristotle’s Ethics, 2001, sec. 2, para. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Nicomachean Ethics, bk. 1, sec. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Aristotle’s Ethics, 2001, sec. 2, para. 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Nicomachean Ethics, bk. 8, sec. 3, para. 3 & 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Nicomachean Ethics, bk. 8, sec. 2, para. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Nicomachean Ethics, bk. 8, sec. 3, para. 9 & 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Krucoff, 1982, para. 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Krucoff, 1982, para. 17 & 33 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Kaliarnta, sec. Loss of the ‘shared life’ between online friends: arguments and counterparts, para. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Holt-Lunstad, sec. Friendship and Health, intro. para. 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)