Bailey Nixon

Friendship 101: How to Be a Good Friend

To my dear friends Sally and John,

I know you are stressed about your future relationships due to the upcoming move, so I am writing to offer some advice on how to make beneficial friendships in the new city. In this letter, I will explain how to create and uphold successful friendships and emphasize the importance of them. While I can only provide you with words of advice, it is vital that you actively seek new friends once you’re settled.

When you meet your new neighbors, coworkers, or anyone alike, keep in mind how friendships are built. In most cases, friendships are established from companionship, or doing something together. However, just because you live next to someone or work next to their cubicle, does not mean you will automatically become friends. True friendship stems from doing something that is “inward, less widely shared and less easily defined”.[[1]](#footnote-1) Companions may interact, but friends share deep and meaningful connections from morals or practices they are passionate about. These connections are unique to the friendship and cannot be shared with everyone else. If you discover a shared interest with someone, expand on it to show your genuine interest in them, signifying that you wish to be true friends.

An important aspect ingrained within strong friendships is the ability to become virtuous, or for an individual to be morally excellent and all-knowing about the manner of evils. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, believed that good friends promote virtue and provide you with a drive to act virtuously.[[2]](#footnote-2) Essentially, with a good friend, you are able to become the best possible version of yourself. Friends internally motivate you to become moral and to wish good for others. As a result of this, friendships are largely based upon the well-being of those involved. Aristotle claims that friendship is a mutual goodwill that friends are cognizant of.[[3]](#footnote-3) In order to maintain a solid friendship, you must always wish for the good of your friend, but they must also do the same for you. Aristotle’s argument here is exactly how to maintain a healthy friendship. However, you must not enter a friendship solely depending on the goodwill from your friend.

Along with wishing goodwill for your friend, an additional aspect of a valuable friendship is practicing self-appreciation. The act of establishing a relationship with oneself is not greedy; it leads the way for great friendships to blossom. It is important to note that a relationship with oneself “[is] the source of a friendship with another”.[[4]](#footnote-4) A loyal friend will treat himself well, because after all, they are both a friend and are befriended.[[5]](#footnote-5) While you have the opportunity to gain a friend, you can also become one if you practice self-admiration. When connecting with others, you must keep your well-being in mind and be friendly to yourself. You know what is best for you, what interests you, makes you happy, etc., which is necessary for personal growth. Ultimately, making friends is beneficial, but there is no better friend to you than yourself.

Now that you are familiar with how to create and uphold friendships, I must explain why friendships are necessary for your personal well-being. Strong friendships are the basis for happiness and self-growth, and especially during a major life change like this move, you will need friends now more than ever. In extreme cases it can be argued that without social contact, humans can generate senses of pain, hunger, or fear.[[6]](#footnote-6) As humans, we thrive off of social contact and are dependent on forming relationships with others. When someone gives you affection, attention, and encouragement, they are contributing to your well-being and self-formation.[[7]](#footnote-7) Keep in mind that while your friends provide you with these healthy qualities, you are doing the same for them. Everyone deserves to feel cared for and encouraged, and maintaining a solid friendship is a great way for these feelings to thrive.

One final thing to keep in mind when establishing new friendships is to leave technology out of it. In our modern times, it can be difficult to disconnect from our phones, computers, etc. However, as a good friend, you should make the effort to be completely engaged and interact with your friends when they are around. Unfortunately, your phone cannot provide you with the same happiness, encouragement, or support that a friend can. After watching *Black Mirror’s* “NoseDive”, you have seen firsthand how technology can impact your friendships. In numerous scenes during the episode, you watched how Lacey pushed her brother away, destroying their relationship due to social media.[[8]](#footnote-8) Lacey could have chosen to create a meaningful relationship with her brother, but rather she chose to infatuate herself with technology, ending her chances of becoming a great friend and a better person. Don’t be like Lacey.

Without a doubt, I am confident that you will make strong friendships in the new city. After all, you have been such great friends of mine, and I know you will take this advice to heart. While you’re off making new friends, don’t forget about me! I wish you the best of luck with your move and new relationships.

Most sincerely,

Bailey Nixon

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