

THE ART OF MAKING FRIENDS

"And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." I Samuel 18:1.

A friend is one who is intimately known, respected, esteemed, and loved by another. Friendship is the mutual attachment of two persons who are thus known and loved. It is of tremendous value. In fact, it is one of the best things in life, because it makes life rich and full, bright and joyous, tender and sweet. It is the greatest boon of human circumstances. Cicero spoke the truth when he said, "Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the usefulness of which all mankind are agreed."

I. The Reality of Friendship.

To know that friendship is a reality we have only to consider:

1. Our own experiences.

Each of us has friends. Friendship makes life really worth living.

2. Our observation of others.

We have noted the friendships that exist between those about us.

3. Our study of history.

All history is full of the praise of friendship. Even the heathen writers made much of it. Socrates, for instance, said, "All people have their different objects of ambition--horses, dogs, money, honor, as the case may be, but for my own part I would rather have a good friend than all these put together."

We have such notable examples in the world-renowned friendships of Damon and Pythias, Jonathan and David, Ruth and Naomi, Paul and Timothy, Johnson and Boswell, Scott and Lockhart, Tennyson and Hallam, Robert and Elizabeth Browning, Godkin and Lowell. When Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning said to Charles Kingsley, "Tell me the secret of your life that I may make mine beautiful too," he replied, "I have a friend!" That was the secret that made all the difference. Constantius, the father of Constantine the Great, said, "My treasures are my friends." The study of biography reveals the truthfulness of what Plautus said, "Nothing is there more friendly to a man than a friend in need."

4. Our study of the Bible.

There are two pictures in the Bible which reveal the reality of friendship in an unusual way. One of these is the friendship of Jonathan and David, and the other is the friendship of Jesus for us.

The friendship between Jonathan and David was remarkable. The one was heir-apparent to a throne, and the other was a shepherd who had become a military notable. The day on which Goliath was slain was the birthday of the beautiful and memorable friendship between Jonathan and David. Jonathan had watched the shepherd lad go forth to the famous duel. His heart had gone with him. His prayers had ascended for him. And when young David stood before Saul after his successful duel with Goliath, no more eager eye was fixed on him and no more greedy ear devoured his words than the eye and the ear of Jonathan. As David told his story with the winning modesty of a boy who has done a really brave thing as a matter of course and dislikes talking about it, there began the romantic and enduring friendship which was honorable to both. We are told "that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

Jonathan's friendship for David seems to have originated in admiration. David was one of those divinely favored personalities who irresistibly attracts everyone

whom it touches in such a way that no one is able to withstand its charm. The chivalrous nature of Jonathan fell at once under the spell of the heroic youth. They had natural affinities--youth, courage, and faith in God. These two souls were knit together in their desires and motives as the warp and woof of a web. The vital interests of the one were intertwined with the vital interests of the other. The friendship of Jonathan and David embraced all that entered into any ordinary friendship--appreciation, love, confidence, tenderness, and fidelity.

We admire the enthusiasm of the one for the other, the absolute trust, the freedom from all jealousy, the readiness to serve, the unaffected expression of their love, and the faithfulness with which it was maintained. To the very end their hearts were linked together by the bond of strong and unbroken affection. No quarrel ever clouded their friendship, no hand but that of death tore them asunder. Jonathan's last thought may have been of David, and David's sorrow was overwhelming when he heard of the death. His loss was intensified by the memory of his friend's generosity, faithfulness, and unselfishness. Unchangeable and unwavering to the end will any true friendship be. When Jonathan had fallen in battle on Mount Gilboa, David lamented over him as for a brother indeed. He cried, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." II Samuel 1:26.

The friendship of Jesus Christ for us is wonderful in its condescension, in its spontaneity, sacrifices, services, and bestowments. He is a faithful friend in every hour of need and every time of distress. His friendship for us never ends.

II. The Reasons For Friendship.

1. Our need of it.
Every person needs faithful friends. It does not matter in what condition man is found, whether in riches or in poverty, whether ignorant and rude or civilized and highly educated, he needs friendship of fellows. Friendship is a necessity of our lives.
2. Others need it.
It enables us to share whatever excellencies we may have with others who realize their deficiencies. If others are to be happy they must have friends too. One has said, "A friend in need is a friend indeed."
3. The will of the Lord.
He wants us to be friends and have friends. Emerson said, "The only way to have a friend is to be one." There is no friendship as firm and enduring as that which is based upon doing the will of the Lord, who said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

III. The Recipe For Friendship.

1. Openness of mind.
A true friend unbosoms freely, advises justly, assists readily, adventures boldly, takes all patiently, defends courageously, and continues a friend unchangingly.
2. Be sincere.
Sincerity is essential to the making of friends. The reason that many desirable contacts and acquaintances never mature into friendships may be due largely to selfish motives which prompted desire to develop a friendship.

Friendship is to be valued for what there is in it; not for what can be gotten out of it. Many people never make friends because their actions are prompted by wrong

motives. They are not looking for friends, but servants. If one follows the main roads in history, he will discover that those who had true friends were not so much concerned about having friends as they were with being friends. They were not watching the receiving side; they were strong on the giving side.

Selfishness is abhorred in people. There is nothing that will drive others from you more quickly than the knowledge that you are just "using them," with little or no concern for their well-being or welfare.

3. Be friendly.

Others want friends, too; so if you want a friend, be a friend. If you are so intent on what you are doing, or where you are going, and if you are so absorbed in your own affairs that you do not have time to greet others you will make few, if any, friends. The expression you wear on your face is more important than the clothes you wear on your back. If you want people to like you, you must smile. It costs nothing, but creates much. It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give. It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is no earthly good to anybody until it is given away.

4. Be courteous and kind.

Courtesy and kindness always attract. They claim attention and consideration from others. Kindness is never wasted. If those upon whom it is bestowed fail to appreciate it, it cultivates the spirit of good-will in one's own life, and others discover it there. Qualities that attract friends are not external attachments; they are internal revelations. You cannot take them on as desired; you must develop them from within.

5. Be genuinely interested in people.

You can make more friends in one month by being genuinely interested in other people than you can in a year by trying to get other people interested in you. People are not interested in you. They are not interested in me. They are interested in themselves--morning, noon, and night. The New York Telephone Company made a detailed study of telephone conversations to find out which word is most frequently used. "I" was used 3,990 times in 500 conversations. When you see a group photograph that you are in, whose picture do you look for first? If you think the world is interested in you, answer this question: If you died tonight how many people would come to your funeral? Why should people be interested in you unless you are first interested in them? You can win attention, time and cooperation of people by becoming genuinely interested in them. If you want to make friends and get people to like you, you must be interested in other people.

6. Make other people feel important.

John Dewey said that the deepest urge in human nature is "the desire to be important." Almost every normal adult wants, health and preservation of life, food, sleep, money and things it will buy, sexual gratification, well-being of our children, a feeling of importance, and life in the hereafter. Most of these are gratified, except one--the desire to be important or great. Lincoln once began a letter by saying, "Everybody likes a compliment." William James said, "The deepest principle in human nature is craving to be appreciated."

7. Like people.

You must like people in general, if you want them to like you. You cannot conjure up much of a friendship with anyone, if you do not have a fond feeling in your heart for the human species. Will Rogers said, "I never met a man whom I could not like."

8. Do things together.

This cements friendship more than almost anything else. Even to play together makes friends. Still more to work together, strive together, sacrifice together, and suffer together makes friends who are inseparable. Doing things together implies the union of hearts and hands, comradeship in the common aims of life, mutual interest and service.

IV. The Rewards of Friendship.

1. It brings comfort.

We cannot live self-centered lives without missing the true glory of life.

2. It brings counsel.

Talking with a true friend gives great satisfaction of mind.

3. It provides comradeship.

Comradeship is one of the strongest forces in life. It is a great help to us in our difficulties. Nothing is more delightful than having true friends. Make all the friends you can. You will be rich in proportion to the number of true and faithful friends that you have.

We are indebted to Edgar A. Guest for this poem.

A FRIEND

"A friend is one who stands to share
Your every touch of grief and care.
He comes by chance, but stays by choice,
Your praises he is quick to voice.

No grievous fault or passing whim
Can make an enemy of him.
And though your need be great or small,
His strength is yours throughout it all.

No matter where your path may turn,
Your welfare is his chief concern.
No matter what your dream may be,
He prays your triumph soon to see.

There is no wish your tongue can tell,
But what it is your friend's as well.
The life of him who has a friend,
Is double-guarded to the end."