



Cautions and Concerns About "Friendship"

Don't think that everyone you meet will be good friendship material. In most people's experience, they have to causally meet between fifty and a hundred new people to find one who, three years later, will have become a good friend.



[1]Now, this isn't negative. Think of whom you meet. You join a new yoga class and interact with 5-35 people a week – but do you actually get to know them? You chat with the tellers at the bank or cashiers at the grocery. You say hello to the librarian and have casual conversations with friends of friends at a party. The numbers add up. Treat them lightly, but courteously. You may be encountering your newest and best ever friend.

Here, now, are some cautions about new friendships:

1. You can change or reform yourself if you like, but it is not your job to change anyone else. Don't try to change someone else to make them be a better "fit" – and don't waste time being someone you are not just because someone else wants to change you. Be authentic and show up fully. See who else does too.
2. Be kind and thoughtful, but stay true to yourself. A good friend sometimes does things she'd prefer not to – a concert with a band that's not a favorite, helping move when it's inconvenient – but does not give into pressure to do something she thinks is wrong or hurtful. Setting your own boundaries leaves room for generosity to both yourself and others.
3. If staying true to convictions or beliefs causes someone to move away from you, know this is OK. Having integrity will help you find friends who love you for who you are.
4. Remember the saying I first heard in Camp Fire when I was a little girl: "make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, and the other gold." Unless you've discovered that those you've thought of as friends actually are hurtful to you, don't leave one set to gain access to another.
5. Making friends with money is a poor avenue to good friendships. Exchanges must be fair and have equal value from each side to be sustainable. A listening ear may balance with a dinner. A loaned item may equate with a ticket to an event. Talk about how the exchange feels – looking at more than money.
6. Remember that your intuition and experience with someone are good places to start when choosing a friend. If it feels wrong, intrusive, scary – or if you've experience with being uncomfortable around someone, take this seriously. Start slowly and pay attention. **YOU ARE WORTH IT!**

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