

Psychological Benefits of Friendship

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If you've ever had a friend that you could laugh, cry, and share your most intimate secrets with, then you know how powerful friendship can be. It's having someone in your life that can lift you up when you're low and celebrate your victories with you.

Friendships can have a major impact on your health and well-being, but it's not always easy to build or maintain them. Read on to understand the importance of friendships in your life and what you can do to develop and nurture new ones.

Benefits of Friendship

Friends not only prevent loneliness, but they also:

- Increase your sense of belonging and purpose
- Boost your happiness and reduce your stress
- Improve your self-confidence and self-worth
- Help you cope with traumas, such as divorce, serious illness, job loss, or the death of a loved one
- Encourage you to change or avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as excessive drinking or lack of exercise

- Help put your problems in context to develop a stronger sense of meaning and direction
- Increase feelings of security and help protect against stress
- Ease the emotional impact of difficulties and offer new ideas about tackling them

Good times. Don't discount the simple pleasure of being in company with other people that you like. This can often lead to laughter and taking part in activities that raise the spirits and provide a distraction from the more serious side of life.

Reciprocity. The give and take between partners in a friendship is an important part of the process. People enjoy doing something for someone they like. The reciprocity that exists in a relationship helps sustain it over time and ensures that the friendship lasts.

Friends also play a significant role in promoting your overall health. Adults with strong social support are lower risk of many medical conditions. These include depression, [high blood pressure](#), and obesity.

Why Friendship Matters

Advances in technology allow us to connect with anyone in the world with a click of a button. But having hundreds of friends online isn't quite the same as a few close friends you can really connect with on a deep level. This doesn't mean you can't have buddies online. Just try to remember to prioritize face-to-face interaction too.

Tips for Making New Friends

When you're looking for a friend, try to find someone that you can trust. It's important to share a deep level of understanding and have good communication. Some things a good friend will do include:

- Show a genuine interest in your life, what you have to say, and how you think and feel
- Accept you exactly as you are
- Listen to you without judgment
- Not trying to tell you how to think and feel or changing the subject
- Share things about themselves, so you have an open exchange of vulnerability

Two-way street. A friendship is a two-way street. Both individuals must feel comfortable supporting and accepting each other. This creates and shares a bond of trust and loyalty.

When you're looking for potential friends, consider the people you may have interacted with before. Think about people who:

- You've worked or taken classes with
- You've been friends with in the past but have since lost touch
- You've enjoyed chatting with at social gatherings
- You share family ties with

Try putting yourself out there and reaching out to different people to see what resonates. Here are a few ways to do so.

Attend community events. Look for groups or clubs that are set up to explore an interest or hobby you have. You can find groups like this on social media, community bulletin boards, or other places online by doing a simple Google search for meetups in your area.

Volunteer. Volunteering can be a great way to do something meaningful in your community and spark potential friendships too. It's easy to form strong connections when you work with people who have mutual interests.

Try new things. Take a college or community education course to meet people who have similar interests. You can also explore classes at a local gym, senior center, or community fitness facility.

Join a faith community. This can be a great way to get involved with social events, playing music, or aiding a cause that you believe in with people you like.

Psychological Limits of Friendship

Keep in mind that although friendship can be a powerful way to support you through all the ups and downs of your life, it's not a substitute for mental health treatment.

If you have emotional experiences that affect your ability to function, consider talking to a licensed [mental health professional](#).

Above all, stay positive. You may not become friends with everyone you meet, and that's okay! Maintaining a friendly attitude and demeanor can improve your life relationships. It also increases your chances of attracting more like-minded people into your life.

