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VIEWS

Good Friends Forever



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Friends are the family we get to choose. But don't expect too much from them, cautions MALLIKA BHATIA

Recall the worst time of your life. Now try to remember that one person who stood by you in this hour of crisis. It could either be a parent, sibling or close friend. Chances are it was the latter. Your friend was there for you, comforting reassuring and supportive. That's what friends are about: providing constant support, our comforting confidant and our worst critic. They are the family we choose!

Friends are people we love to spend time with. They give us company when we are lonely, support us unconditionally and accept us despite our shortcomings. They make celebrations fun, and they help us be ourselves.

Not just that, friends also help us grow at a spiritual level. Each soul is on a journey. Friends are guides who come into our lives, play their roles and move on. Don't we all have friends who we were very close to at one point, but with whom we are no longer in touch with now? They drifted away from our life when their role as guide was over. What friends do for us cannot be described in words. It is important for us to have friends but many of us find it difficult to strike up a friendship.

Don't Expect Too Much

If we keep a few things in mind, it shouldn't be difficult to make friends. The first is to start a relationship with the right expectations. Don't expect too much. If you start with high hopes, the relationship is likely to flounder. For anyone to fulfil your expectations, they need to understand what is expected of them. This understanding takes time. Besides, expectations are always two-sided, so having low expectations ensures the same from others. One of the drawbacks of starting a friendship with high expectations is that at every step, you start judging the person and his actions. There is a constant dialogue going on in your mind where you are trying to judge if the person is fitting into your definition of a friend.

Stop Being Judgemental

If you are too judgemental, you might focus only on the negatives and miss out on some of the finer qualities your friends might possess. People don't necessarily have to fit into your image of a good person. There are many other ways in which people can be good. Also, if every person in your life fits into your definition of good, chances are that all the people in your life will be alike. If you are eclectic in your views, life will shower on you an abundance of friends.

Another important aspect of friendship is understanding that we all grow and change. Since we continue to grow, we continue to evolve. Hence, it is important that you don't judge people by their past actions. Always give them another chance. See them with neutrality. That way you can start a relationship from an absolutely new perspective, like painting on a clean canvas. What you paint is then up to you.

Another golden rule is to have no pre-conceived notion about either the person or the relationship. What the relationship should involve should be determined by the experiences the two people share, and not by a fixed definition that is prevalent. The relationship could be an intense one, or it could be just a casual friendship where both people have the same idea of fun. If you don't start with a fixed notion, the freedom in the relationship helps you grow and explore.

Communication Is Important

In any relationship, and especially in friendship, it is important to communicate clearly what you are feeling. Honest communication leads to the right expectations. Always speak frankly about the way you feel. This ensures that your friend understands you for who you are and not the image that she might have created in her mind. It also ensures that there is complete acceptance and trust in the relationship.

The more acceptance there is, the easier it is to trust. Eventually trust is the basis for any strong relationship. But to develop trust you need to communicate clearly and be non-judgemental. Make sure you do your best to nurture the friendship.

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