SERIES E



Attract The People You'd Like to Be Like

Friendships: the reward you get from giving yours away.



SERIES E: Topic 1

Making Friends

When you have friends you are close to, it makes you feel better about yourself. What good is success if you don't have friends to share your thoughts, struggles and accomplishments with? Without them, your life isn't providing you the nourishment you need to be happy and do your best. Loneliness can cause depression or alcoholism and can shorten your life.

The thoughts and mannerisms of your friends are contagious. If you are around them for a while, you'll catch what they've got. Your job is to be around people who will infect you with thoughts and ways that will make life better for you and your family.

> **Strangers are friends you haven't met. Friends are people who know all about you but like you anyway!**

If you don't have close friends, ask yourself:

- Do I come off as being unwelcoming, bored, or uninterested?
- Who have I been a good friend to?
- Whose friendship have I worked hard enough to earn?
- What am I saying or doing that is turning others off (attitude, hang-ups, sarcasm, manners, appearance, values and/or self-centeredness)?
- What could I be doing to attract them?

- How can I get to talk to more of them?
- Are my views too strong, dark, selfish, suggestive, liberal or conservative?

About Your Friends

- Who can you discuss anything with, get good advice from, and know your confidentiality will be respected?
- How many friends do you have who you can drop in on without notice anytime?
- How many people know and care about the hardships you have gone through in your job or personal life?
- How many people have you asked for their opinion on any important personal matter in the last month?
- How many people have asked you for your opinion on any important personal matter in the last month?
- Who is likely to give you the best advice on your career or on your personal life?
- Do you value the friendship of your family members more than your friendships with others?
- Who has given you the best advice in your life, so far?
- Do you share information about yourself, or hoard it?
- Do you use alcohol or drugs to fill in for the friends you don't have?
- How can I overcome my shyness and pick up the phone?
- How do you get close enough to talk?

Your Icebreakers

These conversation starters are likely to encourage others to talk with you. The list begins with the best:

- One or more small children
- A pet
- An unusual (not weird) activity
- A hobby that excites you
- A piece of sports equipment or clothing
- A carrying case for an instrument
- A logo on your shirt or jacket
- A cool camera
- A special vehicle
- A brochure or keychain device

Now that you get the idea, look for "icebreakers" in and around the people you want to meet.

Relationships need time to grow. Spend time with people you are likely to like, in ways that will allow you to see them over and over.

Spend Time with People You'd Like to Know

Parents who cheer for their kids at Little League all season become well acquainted with other families there.

Neighbors in new subdivisions bond easily as they landscape their yards.

Attending classes brings students together. Sign up for a course that appeals to you (golf, photography, etc.).

Ask someone for help or offer it (which suggests you are comfortable around that person).

Volunteer your skills for any good cause.

Use the Internet to find groups you can join that have activities you like. Meetup.com offers a wide variety of groups from Jeep clubs to movie buffs, and it has chapters all over the U.S.

> **When a person trusts you, you probably want to trust him or her back. When you trust others, most of them want to trust you back.**

Getting Your Act Together

Be happy.

Like yourself.

Shed your baggage.

Be first to break the ice and introduce yourself.

Try not to seem self-conscious.

Be engrossed (caught up) in an activity you find interesting.

Get involved in an activity others are already doing, or something you like to do or are good at.

Don't frighten people off by trying too hard or moving too fast to make a friend out of an acquaintance.

Minimize your solo activities like watching TV and surfing the Web.

Do activities where you interact with others; don't just be in the same place all the time.

Appear approachable. Smile and make eye contact.

When introduced to others, ask about their work or favorite activity to help you remember them.

If the other person can't remember your name, he might avoid you. Occasionally mention your name again (as if you wouldn't expect the other person to remember it).

Ask a few questions that are light, fun and impersonal to show you are friendly and feel comfortable around the person.

Act as if you are going to be liked.

Be patient and enjoy the other person's comments.

Encourage the other person to open up, and they will be unaware of whether you are nervous.

Act naturally. Expect a few goofs along the way as you improve this skill.

Never complain, exaggerate, brag or speak poorly of another person.

Practice on everyone you meet.

People will all get to know you eventually, so be yourself from the beginning. There is always a risk in making an attempt to get to know someone. You have to be willing to take chances if you want your world to grow through people you get to know.

There is a greater risk in allowing a person you don't know to have your contact information. An answering machine, a seldomused email address, and meeting only in public places can help you keep newcomers at a distance until you are comfortable with them.



ASK YOURSELF

How can I act more comfortable with myself so others will be more comfortable around me?

What can I do to improve my appeal to others?