

## THE ART OF FRIENDLINESS

As children we are able to make friends in minutes. Everywhere we look, we see potential friends. But as we grow into teenagers, it doesn't seem so simple anymore. We forget how easy it is to talk to another person, as self-doubts and worries about being 'good enough' creep in.

We also begin to make judgements about others based on how they look and act, and we decide whether they're a good 'fit' for us or not. The ease of childhood friendships disappears and is replaced with more complex communications — both spoken and unspoken. We must re-learn what was so simple for us as children: the art of friendliness.

Employers need staff that are friendly with each other and with their customers. It doesn't matter whether you like the person or even know them. It's your job to be friendly. Discover below how easy it is to enjoy talking with someone you don't know or who is completely different to you.

### Here are some tips on how to be friendly with others:

#### Greet Others

You can walk around looking staunch or shy, or you can be the person who greets others with a nod or a smile, acknowledging that other people exist. You can shake someone's hand and take pride in what you have accomplished. You'd be surprised how much others will appreciate your effort.



#### Don't be afraid to start a conversation

Talking to a stranger is hard to do, but give it a go; it doesn't have to be anything too deep. As Chris MacLeod wrote on his blog [SucceedSocially.com](http://SucceedSocially.com), "Even saying hi, asking for their name, and saying, *'Cool, nice meeting you. I'll see you around later hopefully'* can be good." It'll make people feel included, and that is friendly.

#### Don't blow people off

Blowing people off is the opposite of being friendly. Cold-shoulders, one word answers, totally ignoring them — it's mean. Even if you are doing this because you're feeling shy, it still makes the other person feel hurt. So if someone is making an effort to talk to you, be kind and give them something back in return. If someone has ever blown you off, you'll know how it feels, so be thoughtful.



## Check your body language

You may be the most chilled person in the room, but your body language can make people think otherwise. So take a moment and focus on what kind of vibes you're putting out there. Do you think you are sending out the “don't come near me” vibe, or the “I'm a friendly person, come talk to me” vibe? Think about standing up, moving away from the wall and smiling, so people will think you are more approachable. Look in the mirror and practice what a friendly smile might look like.



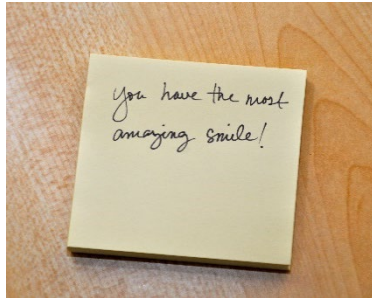
## Invite someone to hang out with you

You don't need to wait until someone invites you to hang out. Be the one to take the first step. It's as simple as suggesting to catch up for coffee or to shoot some hoops or watch a game together. Challenge yourself to meet up with one new person and see how it goes.

## Make it comfortable for others

If someone approaches your group at a school or work gathering, give them a break. It would have taken tons of courage to come up to a strange group. Make it easy for them. Find that happy balance between being interested but not interrogating them. See if you can find something you have in common or just let them join in with what the rest of you are talking about. Who knows, this might lead to a new friendship.





### **Give a compliment**

One of the nicest things you can do is to compliment somebody on something. Make sure it's genuine, because nothing is worse than a made-up compliment. It could be about something they're wearing, something they said or something you know they've accomplished. This makes them feel special and makes them feel warmly towards you. A win-win situation.

### **Be in tune with others' feelings**

Being friendly is not always about having fun and passing out compliments. Sometimes it's about hanging out with a "bummed out" friend. Just being there and listening is powerful. Your mate will really value you making the time, and he/she will feel much better having shared their worries with a friend. The friends who are there when we need them are the people we want in our lives.



### **Laugh at people's jokes**

A good friend will laugh at your jokes, even if they're not that funny or they've heard it before. You don't criticise them for it, you build them up. You can be yourself with each other, so you don't need to behave in any special way.



Adapted from Bustle's '11 tips for being a little more friendly':

<https://www.bustle.com/articles/154954-11-tips-for-being-a-bit-more-friendly-in-everyday-life>

## Challenge yourself

Print out this activity or save it on your device. Have a read each morning to remind yourself of the tips. Each day, choose at least 2 tips that you would like to try during the day. Try them all if you can. Keep a record of what you accomplish over a week and share this with someone you trust.

- What is your tick total?

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- Which tips did you find easiest to do?

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- Which tips did you not do? Why not?

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- Which would be the hardest for you to do? Why?

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- Have these tips helped you to become more friendly?

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Congratulations for giving these go! Remember, you build up skills through practice, so you won't nail them all straight away. Keep practicing and over time, you'll feel more confident doing them.