



HOW CAN I MAKE FRIENDS?



How can I make friends?

Friends share. They respect each other, support each other ... and have fun together. Everyone in a friendship needs to put in equal effort to make it happen and keep it going.

How do we make friends?

We don't just make friends on the first day of school, we make them throughout our lives. We can make friends anywhere, any time: at school, at sports, at a dance, hanging out after school, on holiday, online, through letters, in hospital, over the phone. It helps if we keep an open mind and treat others the way we'd like a friend to treat us. We need to:

- Make connections - people have to know something about you to like you, so join in and speak up ... (even if you're really shy and do it in a really tiny voice!)
- Talk and listen - everyone has something interesting or fun to say
- Share things and always be pleasant and polite
- Encourage or praise people for what they've done ... never go in for put-downs
- Do things for people and with them
- Avoid talking about people behind their backs or sharing their secrets (unless it's for their safety)
- Try to understand others' feelings and points of view rather than always arguing for your own or making people do things your way

Inviting someone to join you when you're playing at break, or asking if you can join a group to eat lunch are both real-life examples of making connections.

What other real-life examples of friend-making behaviours can you think of?

Being shy and making friends



Everyone is shy at some time. When someone's shy it can be hard for them to join in activities, ask to join groups, or even talk to people. They might be worried people will say "No", or laugh at them because they're new to something or awkward at it.

If you're around someone who seems shy, make an extra effort to ask them to join in (but don't pressure them if they're really uncomfortable); praise and encourage them if they do.

If you're shy, you can still smile, encourage others, and accept invitations to join in. Keep trying and before long you'll be asking to join in or inviting others to! Keep an eye out for other people who look shy - they might really want to talk to you and have a lot in common, but someone has to make the first move.

Shy people are often great listeners and very aware of other people's feelings: this makes them wonderful friends. Everyone benefits if they let their light shine.

Feeling different and making friends

We're all unique. It can take a while to find a person who is a really close match for our feelings or personality ... so don't give up. But we're also all human, and there's probably more that unites us (brings us together) than divides us. So talk to people about their different interests and interesting differences - and who knows what might happen!



Some thoughts about friendship

"The only way to have a friend is to be one." Ralph Waldo Emerson

"There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met." William Butler Yeats

"A man's friendships are one of the best measures of his worth." Charles Darwin

"Wear a smile and have friends; wear a scowl and have wrinkles." George Eliot

"It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends." J K Rowling

USEFUL LINKS

"What makes a good friend?", and "What is Empathy?" Life Education factsheets.



REFERENCES

Women and Children's Health Network, 4 May 2017. "Feeling Lonely". Retrieved from: <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=1800> 5 December 2017.

Women and Children's Health Network, 13 October 2016. "Friendship". Retrieved from: <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=286&id=1636> 5 December 2017.

Women and Children's Health Network, 23 January 2017. "Social Skills". Retrieved from: <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=2905> 5 December 2017.