

## Friendship

### What is Friendship?

Friendship is something that we all have in life. Whether we have best friends or close mutual acquaintances, we all have it in some form. Friendship is described as 'a state of injuring affection, esteem, intimacy and trust between two people' (1). But should we want to be with our friends all the time? Not only that, but should we want the same in return from our friends? Are friends needed to be happy in life and pick us up when we need it, or are friends something else to hold us back and another chore that we must keep up with all the time?

### The Downsides of Friendship

We all love our friends in some form or another. Most of the time, we want the best for them, and we want them to succeed in life, but then again, we want the same thing for ourselves. Is friendship just another burden to make us feel insecure about ourselves and prone to make us feel jealous towards them in times of their succession? With friendship comes jealousy. We all know that feeling when somebody does something better than us despite how much effort we may have put into it. However, this feeling is much worse when it is someone that we are close to. If our friends are continuously better than us at things that we want to succeed in then that can lead to many different things such as depression, anxiety and feeling isolated.

Along with this, 'friendships make us obligated to care and worry about another person's feelings' (2). We find ourselves not wanting to upset the other person and going to extreme lengths to do this. We find ourselves constantly worrying about upsetting these other people and doing things that they want to do instead of things that we want to do but is this because they mean so much to us or is it just what we believe we are expected to do.

### What is a Toxic Friendship?

There is a difference between a friendship that doesn't work out and a toxic friendship. A friendship that doesn't work out is something where you both have different interests and find yourselves going in different directions and finding yourselves hanging out with different people. Whereas toxic friendship is something where you might both have similar interests yet one person will drop you at any moment they get. 'Toxic friendships happen when one person is being emotionally harmed or used by another, making the relationship more of a burden than support' (3). You might believe that your friend is there to help you whereas they might be there to perhaps intentionally hurt you because they could be jealous of you or simply just because they're a bad person. Just because a friend has been good to

you and perhaps protected you, it doesn't mean that you are forever in debt to them. You shouldn't forget the bad things and override them with the good things.

### What is a Good Friendship?

'If you are friends with someone for long enough, there are sure to be issues that arrive. Perhaps you will do or say something that will upset your friend. Or maybe they have done something that upsets you. Either way, close friends can candidly talk about these things and work through your issues' (4). Don't think that you are in a toxic friendship just because of one minor issue. If you or your friend fall out in some shape or form that is healthy and that is normal because we all fall out with every single person in our lives at some point. If you are no longer talking to your friend, you simply bring up the issue, confront it and then apologise. However, if you are expecting an apology back and don't get one this is perhaps when a friendship is toxic. If you are there to listen and talk to your friends and they are there to do the same, that is a good friendship.

### Is Friendship Necessary for a Happy, Healthy Life?

Arguably, friendship is something that we all want in life. But does this mean that it is necessary? 'Friendships have a huge impact on our mental health and happiness. Good friends relieve stress, provide comfort and joy, and prevent loneliness and isolation. Developing close friendships can also have a powerful impact on your physical health' (5). So, in my eyes yes, friendship is necessary for a happy healthy life. As discussed, friendship can sometimes be seen as a burden and come with many downsides, however the upsides are so impactful towards us that it is certainly necessary for a happy healthy life.

### Should we compare friendships?

Friendships can come with jealousy within it however there can be jealousy outside of it too. Friendship is all around us and sometimes we can admire someone else's which can lead to jealousy towards their friendship. However, nothing is as perfect as it seems. Each friendship is different. Each friendship has its weaknesses. While also each friendship has its positives. If your friendship works for you and you are happy and comfortable within it, you should not compare yourselves to everyone else as hard as that may be. You should 'hold on to what makes your friendship special [and] put time in your own friendships' (6).

### Conclusion

Overall, friendship is something that I hope we all have and something that we all need. There are many kinds of friendships, some that are toxic and some that are positive, and it is up to you to decide and perhaps change that.

1 - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/friendship>

2 - <https://www.lifevif.com/friendship-15-disadvantages-and-drawbacks-to-consider/>

3 -

<https://choices.scholastic.com/issues/2019-20/110119/the-7-types-of-toxic-friendships.html>

4 - <https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/how-be-good-friend>

5 -

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/making-good-friends.htm>

6 -

<https://www.elitedaily.com/life/comparing-yourself-to-best-friends-new-friends/204706>

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