

## A few Words on Friendship

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Friendship is the base on which the majority of positive human relationships is founded. It is this that fosters love -- receptive, mutual, and eventually parental or unconditional. And love should, ideally speaking, produce joy.

The basis for friendship is quite often determined at the very beginning during contact. We're easily attracted to other people because of a positive resemblance which strikes up a spark of interest in one another. We're also attracted so because so often it stands out clear and loud that good, binding friendships can make living worthwhile and is probably the most important source of joy and happiness for us.

In the early, formative period of a friendship our desire for joy is centered mainly in ourselves and we may be little concerned with bringing joy to the other. For instance, we actively search out our friend's company to gain happiness and stimulation, receiving for the most part his energies, his ideas, his warmth. Because we receive in this process something beneficial and worthwhile we can eagerly look forward to our next meeting. Because of his generosity (spiritual, mainly) to us we are quickly attracted to his personality, favor his likes and dislikes and aspirations, and are drawn to his being. We then want to fit him into our lives and it is not long before this initial, receptive feeling grows into a desire to share our own accounts, experiences, and being with this person-now on a mutual basis. At this stage most of our joy and satisfaction comes from giving: this could be in the form of a favor, or just companionship; perhaps delight, or a solution to a problem; or it could simply show in the form of hope -- hope that the friendship will grow in its scope and beauty and security.

Naturally, such giving is not one sided since the friendship at this point thrives on a flow of energy and vitality, a giving and a receiving, and perhaps more important, on the willingness to continue the relationship. During this period of mutual sharing it is possible that one of us, in our very private corners, run into problems we cannot overcome single-handedly.

Is it not true in most cases that then we turn to those who we believe will sympathize with us, care for us in our circumstances, share our adversities, and offer hopeful, promising solutions to our problems? In this manner sadness is replaced by joy, hopelessness by hope and a positive conviction, and negativity by happiness and new insights. The best of friends may find themselves in situations where one is called upon to take the position of a helpful, strength-giving parent to the other, who would be the "friend in need." But however difficult, a good friend will try to fulfill successfully this role because he values the friend and what he stands for. And since we're not yet living the ideal life a friendship does not always grow to maturity without its share of 'depressions'. However, these are states in which jealousy, resentment, or repulsion may creep up to the surface for many reasons, yet in a true friendship this does not necessarily affect the quality of loyalty, faithfulness, or character that has been built into the friendship.

Unfortunately there's the other kind of friendship too: the reluctant friendship. For if that early, initial spark of attraction is not reinforced and fed by love, truth, warmth, constancy, and the positive acceptance of the goals of such friendship, then many obstacles will have to be overcome and 'growth' is hindered. Such friendships rarely produce great, enduring joy, but rather momentary delight depending upon the existing mood, feeling, or state of mind. This too is friendship no doubt but it is only slightly reliable and may easily lead to confusion, frustration, and hurt.

Most of us have had a "best friend" in our childhood years, the friend for whom we were willing to do anything and everything, the one from whom separation wasn't possible. In later years his small circle of best friends may have grown to two or three but hardly, in most cases, to more than a handful. This is not to say that most of us haven't mixed with the crowds through school, college, business, and so forth. We have. But these friendships were so often empty, tiring, some times draining. Rarely was the energy within multiplied. Such friendships are so often based on tottering foundations (unintentionally) because the values which sustain them are relative values and when put to the test they fall away as autumn leaves. What then is left? Nothing more positive than a memory, an experience, and sadness.

Therefore the importance of adopting God's values as our own.

The best of friendships largely reflect the energy of God, the Heavenly Father, Mother, and Friend of all friends. We see this in the friends themselves, in the powerful constancy of their love, in their willingness to give and receive, in their mutual trust of one another, in the helping hand and sympathetic heart, in their decision to share their fortunes and misfortunes alike. The power of such God-centered friendship is anything but fickle. The fruits of it are always positive, nourishing, and life giving. At this point the subject and object feel free to depend upon one another. In fact good friends would think nothing of imposing on each other so long as their intentions lead them on to "higher ground." Give and take in true friendship becomes a joyful rapport, especially when a pair feel secure and united by the Source of all friendship. For in such a state there is little room for doubt or deception-only the conviction to maintain and promote this friendship; to reinforce it, to build with it, for it, and by it goodness and sincerity; and to stand up to the challenges against it from external forces. It is like a sealed vow: for better or for worse.

Because it is possible for man to develop his true nature through filial and mutual friendship with the Heavenly Father~ we must build human friendship by accomplishing some task for Him. This sets the standard and makes the condition to invoke His support.

In a God-centered marriage a husband and wife can feel the energy and stimulating joy and happiness from one another. If true friendship doesn't always offer all that marriage does it is at least the next best thing to a God-centered marriage.

To quote the Korean sage Sun Myung Moon, initiator of the Divine Principles in this New Age:  
"Everyone has a need to seek something or someone better than he himself is. We all want a friend. A man who can be a friend is needed by everyone. When you become such a person, a true friend to all, how can you then not be a Lord of creation? This is the idea of the Divine Principle -- its main purpose is to develop men like this."

*(Lokesh Mazumdar who was a member of the Toronto Family is working now in U.S. as a pioneer.)*