Making friends

Overview: The goal of this worksheet is to help you implement the different strategies when trying to meet people, grow acquaintances into friendships or restore previous friendships to what they used to be.

Instructions:

There are two key principles to making friends, (a) spending time with people and (b) sharing what you think and feel. Each of these is complex and can be implemented in different ways.

Spending time with people.

Meeting people who will eventually become social friends, allies, or confidants is a numbers game. You cannot know all the people you have met or will meet, which ones will become friends. That means that you cannot prejudge if this person or that person will be a friend. You need to give as many people as you can a chance.

To increase your chance of meeting people, who may become friends, do all of the following.

1. Resurrect old contacts and friends:

Write down the names of five people from school or a previous job that you could reach out to.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Then send them an email or text and check in. You might say something like this. *Hey, it's _____. It's been a long time, and I was curious to see what you were up to. I am living in _____. I'm doing _____. It's been really tough, but I am settling in and doing okay. How have you been?*

This is a test balloon. You are testing the waters to see if there is any potential for renewing a friendship.

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2. Capitalize on existing opportunities <u>at</u> work or school.

Do some research and write down all of the events at your workplace or school in which you might have a chance to meet some people. Remember, this is just about meeting people. You cannot know which person might become a social friend, ally or eventual close friend or confidant, so you have to meet a lot. Also, it doesn't matter what the activity is. If there is yoga offered at work (and that is not your thing, that's okay. It is not about yoga; it is about capitalizing on an existing activity to meet people.

Write down **<u>five events</u>** from school or work that you could join in with a previous job that you could reach out to.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Tip: At school, join a study group (even if you don't need to). It is a good way to meet people. Once you are a part of the group, you can look for opportunities to talk/chat with individuals more and more and see if there is an opportunity to do other things together.

3. Missed opportunities

Think back over the past month and write down five times in which you had an opportunity to do something with someone else and decided not to. This could have been someone asking if you (either alone or part of a group) want to go out, have lunch or get coffee.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now, pick one person from that list (that you can text, call or email) and ask them to do the same. You might just say something like, "I was really, really busy last a couple of months ago, but if you still have time, I would like to catch up and grab a coffee / hang out.

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4. Do lunch or coffee as often as you can.

At work:

If there is a cafeteria or lunchroom at work, make sure you go for lunch. Arrive a bit late so that you can choose who to sit with. Pick a different table, look approachable (i.e., smile), ask if you can join them, and introduce yourself. Join the conversation. For tips on how to do conversations, click here.

At school:

Same thing. If there is a cafeteria or lunchroom at work, make sure you go for lunch. Arrive a bit late so that you can choose who to sit with. Pick a different table, look approachable (i.e., smile), ask if you can join them, and introduce yourself. Join the conversation. For tips on how to do conversations, click here.

Keep in mind:
Getting from being an acquaintance to a social friend takes time, a lot of it. That means you will have to lunch again and again with the same people and see if it clicks.

5. Start or find a new activity <u>outside</u> of work or school.

This is similar to the second strategy, except it happens outside of work or school. Look for some activities that are happening where you live. They can be one-offs (e.g., like a meetup) or more involved, like taking a class or joining a cycling club. Your best chance is to think about all of them. Do some research online.

Meetup.com

Write down five meetups (www.meetup.com) in your area that you **<u>might</u>** join. Pick one that you like and go. Again, it is not about the activity as much as it is about the people you might meet.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Take a class or volunteer

Do some research and write down five volunteer activities or classes you might join. Again, it is not about the activity as much as it is about the people you might meet.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Don't bail out too soon:

There are two key principles to making friends, (a) spending time with people and (b) sharing what you think and feel. Each of these is complex and can be implemented in different ways. But these both take time. You certainly don't want to start nagging people, but if you don't ask enough, then you may miss out. If you don't get any interest after asking twice, then hold off for a bit. Ask a final time four weeks later (but only if and when an opportunity arises), and then move on.

Taking the next steps:

There are two key principles to making friends, (a) spending time with people and (b) sharing what you think and feel. After meeting a few people, you will have a good idea of who you would like to spend more time getting to know better. Again, that means finding (a) further opportunities to spend time (doing something) with that person and (b) letting them get to know you, i.e., what you think, like, dislike, hope for and are terrified of.

Circumstantial friendships

Many friends depend on the regularity of a routine. They belong to a club, are in the same department at work, or attend the same class. That's how a great number of friendships work. And that's okay. The risk is clear. Once the activity is done, you may lose contact with others. From a very technical point of view, these are acquaintances. They are not yet close friendships. They can be very close acquaintances. But at some point, you may wish to see if you can make this more independent of the activity. You don't need to, of course, so long as the activity you depend on will always be there. There are not many activities that are always there – joining a house league team (e.g., hockey) is one; church, mosque or temple is another.

What's your ask?

The most important step to making a friendship out of an acquaintance is asking for someone's number or email. It is only when you can text, email or call outside of the activity that brings you together, and you contact that person with the frequency you need (i.e., regular) and talk to them the way that you should (i.e., share *your* experiences) to build them in friendships.

There are two ways to go about getting contact information – you can **ask for theirs,** or you can **give yours**. Both works. One takes a little bit more courage than the other.

So, when you would like to make **the ask**, try this:

Here's my number …
(write it down and give it to them)

Let me know if you want to
Let me know if you are up for going
Let me know how it is going
Let me know what you are up to
Let me know how you make out with the homework

Give me your number …
(Give them your phone)

I will let you know about …
We can figure out when to meet about …
We can talk about …

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Why would anyone say yes to me?

As difficult as all of this may feel, keep in mind that the majority of people are looking for friends – not just acquaintances and people to hang out with but friends and allies. Most people want what you want – more people in their lives. For this reason, most people (but certainly not all), will want to spend time with others, including you. You do have to find people that you feel comfortable with, which means spending a lot of time talking to people and getting to know people.

Take the pressure off

If you start feeling the pressure to make friends, you will start worrying about whether or not every person you meet will become a friend. That's a lot of pressure that can stress you out and the other person. That's not how this works. You need to find a few people that you are comfortable with. But that means meeting a lot of people. You are better off adopting the mindset of just "meeting people." Meet as many people as you can for the sake of meeting people – rather than trying to make friends. If you go about it this way, you will meet a lot of people, many of whom will be sort of interesting but not really who you feel comfortable with.

But in the midst of all of that, there will be a couple of people with whom you click. These will, over time, become friends.

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