

Friends, Part 1 | who are your kids' friends?

I. What is a Friend?

- Merriam-Webster
 - 1. **a** : one attached to another by affection or esteem **b**: acquaintance
 - 2. **a** : one that is not hostile **b** : one that is of the same nation, party, or group
 - 3. : one that favors or promotes something (such as a charity)
 - 4. : a favored companion
 - 5. : a member of a Christian sect that stresses Inner Light, rejects sacraments and an ordained ministry, and opposes war — called also *Quaker*
- Gretchen Rubin
 - “Just Friends.” She defines this as “a person you see — at a weekly poker game, at your child’s school — who is enjoyable company, but you have no desire to socialize outside a specific context or to get to know that person better.”
 - “Rust Friends” as people “you’ve known for a long, long time; you’re probably not going to get any closer to [them] unless something changes, but a part of your life.”
 - “Trust Friends.” These are people “who show integrity, [people] you feel comfortable with, that you’re always glad to see, but not in your inmost circle; perhaps [people] you’d like to be closer to, if you had the time or opportunity.”
 - “Must Friend.” This is your “best friend, a member of your inner circle, a person you count on when something big happens in your life.”
- Sydneysider Mobinah Ahmad's six stage friendship-acquaintance theory
 - PreAcquaintance — This group makes up 10% of people she knows. She defines this group as people of which she knows nothing beyond their name.
 - Acquaintance Level 1 — She explains this as the “to know of someone” category. She also conjectures that this makes up about 20% of people she knows.
 - We know of each other through mutual friends/acquaintances.
 - We met briefly at a party/social event/university.
 - You’re a work colleague or business client (who I haven’t spent much time with).
 - We run into each other now and then by coincidence.
 - Convenient Interactions. Meeting up is not planned, and only because it is convenient and easy.
 - Details about each other are superficial.
 - Acquaintance Level 2 — This is the “Liking & Preliminary Care” category. She believes this makes up 30% of people she knows.
 - We went to school together, or have known you for a long period of time.
 - We usually meet in groups, rarely one on one.
 - If you needed my help, I would actively participate in helping them to the best of my ability.
 - I can handle a 20 minute small talk chat with you, any longer and I will get bored.
 - Acquaintance Level 3 — This is the “Significant Connection & Care” category that makes up about 25% of people she knows. Now, that description may sound like a friend to you, but even though she says . . .
 - We have a really good connection.
 - We have some very meaningful talks
 - We care a lot about each other.
 - We don’t see each other all that much, just now and then when we plan to meet.

- Her PreFriend (aka Potential Friend) category makes up about 14% of people she knows.
 - Someone I wish were a friend (as defined below and NOT as society currently defines it)
 - I want to spend more time with this person and establish a proper friendship with them.
- She reserves her final category for the 1% of people in her life she actually would call a Friend, and she defines this group as “Mutual Feelings of Love.” She goes on to say . . .
 - I care immensely in every domain of their life (academic, physical, mental wellbeing), how their relationships with their loved ones are. I also care about their thoughts, ideas, elations and fears.
 - I can easily give my honest opinion and thoughts.
 - This person notices when I am upset through subtle indications.
 - I see this person regularly and feel totally comfortable to contact them for a deep and meaningful talk.
 - Someone who takes initiative and makes sacrifices to work on this friendship.
 - Mutual trust, respect, admiration, forgiveness and unconditional care.
 - Note: If it’s not mutual, then we’re not friends.
- Sydneysider’s additional notes.
 - There is no shame in being an acquaintance. I think society has made the word derogatory and that is why it seems offensive. It’s just about being honest.
 - Friendship is not that complicated to me (I know, the irony of making up a theory and calling it uncomplicated). There may be a small few that cannot be categorized because there is history and shades of grey, but I look at my relationship with most people as being black or white, categorized, uncomplicated.
 - The theory is flexible in the sense that people can go up or down the levels and understands that throughout a dynamic friendship, people become closer or further apart from each other.
 - My theory originates from personal experiences. I realize that one of my biggest vulnerabilities is that I’m too sentimental; this theory combats this problem quite efficiently.
 - I understand that this theory cannot be applied to everyone, but it significantly helps me.

Parent.

... a part of the Evermind Ministries family.