

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Making Friends as an Adult
USG, August 2023

CHALICE LIGHTING

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get people interested in you.” – Dale Carnegie

“Right now, someone you haven’t met is out there wondering what it would be like to meet someone like you.” – Unknown

CHECK-IN/SHARING

OPENING READING

We can’t pick our family. Often we cannot pick the people with whom we work and spend a great deal of time. But over our lifetimes we have the opportunity to choose our closest friends and for most of us, our friendships have deeply affected our evolution as a human being. We are who we are today partly due to the companionship and the influence of our friends.

– Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie

“A study...found that friendships are especially beneficial later in life. Having supportive friends in old age was a stronger predictor of well being than family ties – suggesting that the friends you pick may be at least as important as the family you’re born into.”

–Mandy Oaklander

As we get older, friends move away, grow apart from us, or die, leaving us behind.

We can become too busy or too set in our ways to remember to keep choosing each other for friends. So how do we refill our friend bucket?

Let your passion guide you toward people. Common passions help people bond at a personal level, and they bridge people of different ages and life experiences. Once you meet a potential future friend, then comes the scary part: inviting them to do something.

It’s scary because not everyone will want to be your friend or even if they do want to, they may not have the time or energy to take to accept your move toward friendship. –

Mark Bischoff, Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Washington County, Hillsboro, OR

QUOTES

The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, not the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it is the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when you discover that someone else believes in you and is willing to trust your friendship. ~Emerson

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of powerlessness. ~Henri Nouwen

It is not lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages. ~Nietzsche 2

The most beautiful discovery true friends make is that they can grow separately without growing apart. ~Elizabeth Foley

Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: What! You too? I thought I was the only one. ~C.S. Lewis

It's hard, but sometimes it is better to have no friends for a time than to have the wrong friends. The wrong group can lead you down all kinds of paths you really don't want to be on. And retracing your steps can be a long hard journey. ~Sean Covey

Friends are those who treat you kindly behind your back. ~Unknown

Sometimes being a friend means mastering the art of timing. There is a time for silence. A time to let go and allow people to hurl themselves into their own destiny. And a time to help pick up the pieces when it's all over. ~Octavia Butler

Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born. ~Anais Nin

My friends are my estate. ~Emily Dickinson

A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words. ~variously ascribed

Friendship with oneself is all-important because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world. ~Eleanor Roosevelt

Fear makes strangers of people who would be friends. ~Shirley MacLaine

It's the friends you can call up at 4 a.m. that matter. ~Marlene Dietrich

She is a friend of mind. She gather me, man. The pieces I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order. It's good, you know, when you got a woman who is a friend of your mind. ~Toni Morrison

Yes'm, old friends is always best, 'less you can catch a new one that's fit to make an old one out of. ~ Sarah Orne Jewett

The Senility Prayer (from a website)

God, grant me the Senility to forget the people I never liked anyway,
The good fortune to run into the ones I do,
And the eyesight and hearing to tell the difference.

We need old friends to help us grow old and new friends to help us stay young.
~ Letty Cottin Pogrebin

Everyone you meet knows something you don't know but need to know. Learn from them. ~
C.G. Jung

Finding more people to connect with seems beyond our control because we automatically put everyone in the Them column and wait for people to work their way into the Us column. The problem is no one wants to have to prove themselves in order to become friends. We end up waiting and waiting.” — Corin

Right now, someone you haven't met is out there wondering what it would be like to meet someone like you. ~ Unknown

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The lyrics of the song For Good, from the musical Wicked:

I've heard it said that people come into our lives for a reason Bringing something we must learn.

We are led to those who help us most to grow, if we let them, and we help them in return.

Well, I don't know if I believe that's true, but I know

I'm who I am today because I knew you.

Who can say if I've been changed for the better? Because I knew you, I have been changed for good.

DISCUSSION ON MAKING FRIENDS

Have you replaced friends that have left you? Have you changed to compensate for loss of long time friends, or have you just gotten by with fewer friends?

What have you learned as an adult to make new friends and grow closer to those you care for?

Describe how you have held onto or revived long term friendships? Was it worth the effort you put in?

Have toxic friendships made you wary of exposing the real you to new friends? Or have the rewards of new friendships made you more daring in inviting new friendships?

What attributes attracted you as you chose your friends? Or did they choose you?

Reflect on a friendship that you developed in the last 10 years:

How did you first become friends?

How did your friendship change over time (if it did)? What changed it?

How would you describe the friendships that have lasted long and that you most value?

What have you learned from friendships that you initially valued but that didn't last?

FEEDBACK

What will you take away from our discussion?

Is there another part of this topic that you wish we had explored?

CLOSING WORDS:

You have to put yourself out there. There's a chance that the person will say no. But there's also the chance they'll say yes, and something really great could happen.

~ Janice McCabe, Prof. of Sociology, Dartmouth College

When a friend reaches out to you, don't forget to tell them how much it means to you. ~Mandy Oaklander