



FRIENDSHIPS

Why good friends are so important Research has shown that the better the quality of your relationships, the more likely you are to be happy. So, being a great friend to someone and having friends support your back is good for your wellbeing. But what, exactly, makes a good friend?

Signs of a good friend - Friends will come and go in your life, but more important than how long your friendships last is your friends' acceptance of you for who you are. A good friend walks the talk and shows that they care by their actions – big and small.

A good friend:

- * is there for you, no matter what
- * doesn't judge you
- * doesn't put you down or deliberately hurt your feelings
- * is kind and respectful to you
- * is someone whose company you enjoy
- * is loyal
- * is trustworthy and willing to tell you the truth, even when it's hard for you to hear
- * laughs with you
- * sticks around when things get tough
- * makes you smile
- * is there to listen
- * comforts you when you cry.

How to be a good friend - If you treat the people around you in the ways described above, then you're already a good friend to them. But it's not always easy to know how to be there for your friends.

Listen to them - Try to understand a situation from your friend's point of view. Ask questions to get a sense of the problem or issue, but the main thing is to listen to them. You don't have to have all the answers, and don't assume that your friend wants advice – they might just want to talk so that they can work it out for themselves.

Get the facts - If your friend has a medical or mental health issue, a good way to offer support is to learn about what they've been diagnosed with. Being interested in what they're going through shows you care, and that you plan to stick around no matter what's going on.

Ask them what they need - If you're worried about someone and you want to be there for them, ask them what they need. You'll then know what they find helpful during tough times, and you can offer them support in a way that's genuinely helpful.

Keep in touch - Even if you don't live nearby, show your friends you're there for them by making an effort to keep in regular touch through social media, emails, texts and calls.

Tell them how you feel - You don't have to make a big deal about it all the time, but you can make a real difference to how someone is feeling just by letting them know how important they are to you. So, go for it!

Be willing to make a tough call - If you think your friend's safety is at risk, you might need to act without their consent and get help<<https://au.reachout.com/urgent-help>>. It can be a tough call, particularly when you're worried how they'll react, but remember that good friends care enough to step up, and that you're doing it to protect them from harm.