

5

TIPS FOR MAKING FRIENDS WITH SHY PEOPLE

By Carlisa Cramer

You look up in your school's cafeteria at lunchtime and see Chloe eating alone again. She's a young woman in your ward who usually keeps to herself. You've talked to her a few times, but she's quiet and doesn't usually say much in return. You've never really understood why.

You think, "We have fun activities. We're nice people. Why is Chloe still so quiet? Maybe she just

doesn't like us." You don't want her to be alone, and you want to reach out, but you don't know where to start. "Does she even *want* friends? Will I make her feel awkward if I go over there?" Sometimes the unknowns can really trip us up and prevent us from trying at all. It's fine if we don't always know how best to proceed—but we can keep trying.

Here are a few things to keep in mind while trying to befriend people like Chloe who seem shy.

1

BE UNDERSTANDING.

First step: if you like striking up conversations and find it natural and easy to do, understand that the way you like to interact with others isn't always the way others do, especially if they're shy. So when you're trying to become friends with people who are shy, don't try to change them or force them into a situation where they're not comfortable. Some people just prefer more solitude or one-on-one conversations rather than group chats, and that's fine. Make sure to respect their preferences.

2

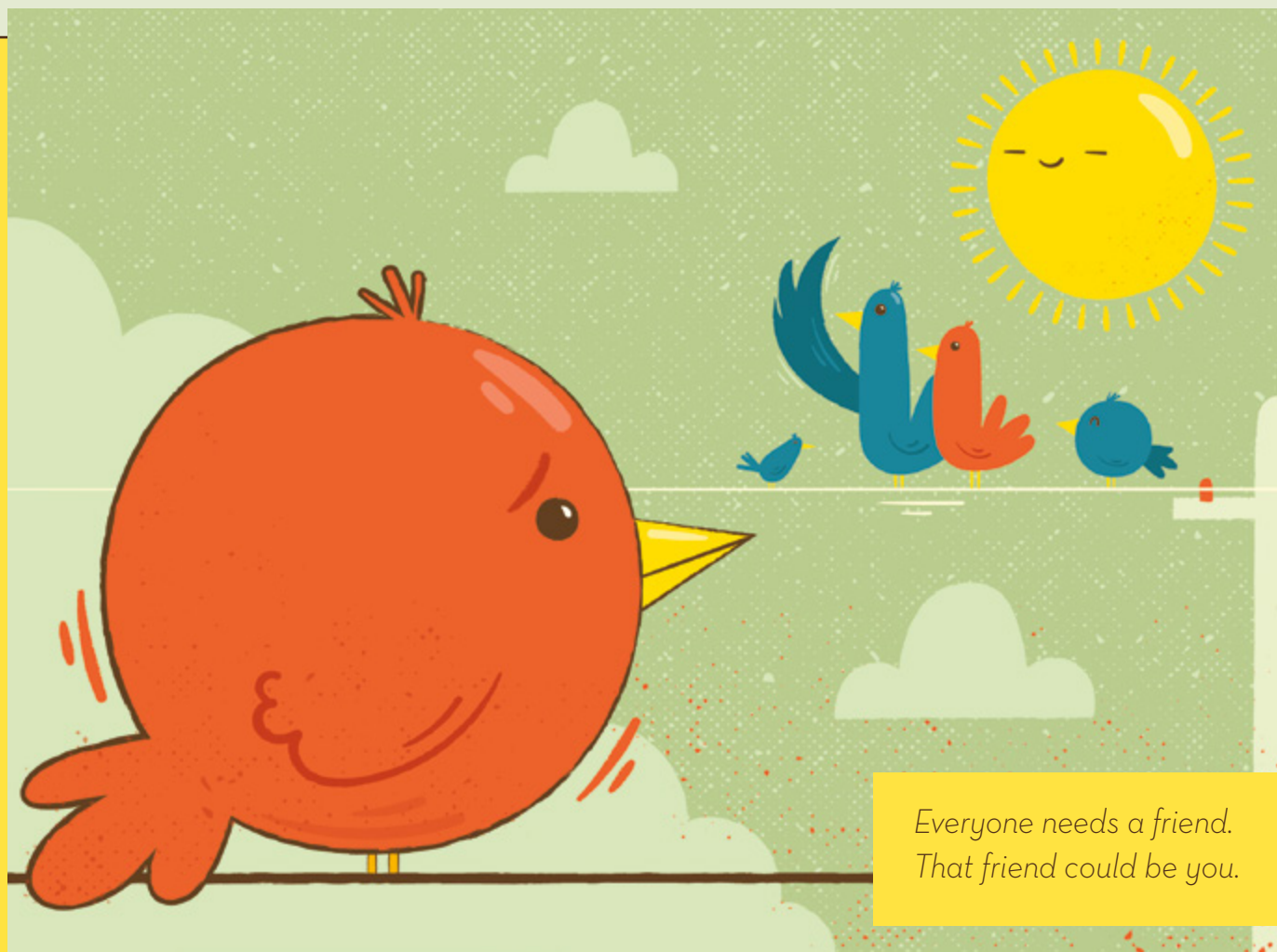
BE PATIENT.

You're not going to break the ice instantly. Sometimes it takes a little while for shy people to feel comfortable enough to open up. They might not respond as you might expect or want them to at first, but that's OK! Just keep looking for casual ways to talk to them. Keep saying hi and inviting them to activities. They'll notice and appreciate your efforts. But remember to always respect their boundaries. That'll give them the emotional freedom to come around when they're ready.

3

BE INTERESTED.

"Shy" doesn't always mean "silent." Shy people usually talk more when the topic is something they're passionate about. So ask them what things they like and then try to find a shared interest. Maybe it's playing a sport, listening to music, watching movies, or reading books. By discovering things you have in common, you'll create a connection that can make a huge difference in how comfortable they feel around you.



*Everyone needs a friend.
That friend could be you.*

4 BE PERSONABLE.

A big group of people can be intimidating for shy people, so when you're reaching out for the first time, try going just by yourself. Next time, maybe bring a friend. If you ever sense that shy people are uncomfortable, though, give them some space. Just make sure they know you're there for them when they're ready.

5 BE SINCERE.

When you're trying to befriend anyone, shy or not, always make sure you're being sincere. Befriend them because you genuinely *want* to get to know them and be their friend, not just because they might be sitting alone. Pray about how to best get to know them and help them feel of your sincere interest in becoming friends.

Now you look over and see Chloe. You make eye contact, and you smile at her across the room. She smiles nervously and looks away. You tell your friends you'll see them later, and then you stand up and walk over to her. "Hi, Chloe," you say. "Can I sit here?" She nods her head yes, and you sit down. You pull out the rest of your lunch and notice the book Chloe has next to her. You ask, "What are you reading? I've been looking for a good book to read!" She looks down at the book, smiles, and starts to tell you a little about it. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.