

Finding and Being TRUE FRIENDS

*Youth from Oxford, England, share their thoughts
about true friendship.*



New Era Staff

From the best friend you've had since you were five to the new student you met in your math class, it's important to have good friends. And as it says in *For the Strength of Youth*: "Everyone needs good and true friends. They will be a great strength and blessing to you" ([2011], 16). But how do you find and keep good friends?

We asked youth in England about what true friendship means to them. Check out some of their stories about their true friends and how those friends have strengthened them. You might find that your own friends are a great strength to you too.

What makes someone a good friend?

Aaron M.: I think you should be excited to see your friends. You should care about them and you should know that they care about you. You can feel comfortable around them. You don't feel like you have to act like someone else when you're around them.

Leighton H.: Someone who supports you and comforts you.

Maddy H.: Someone that you trust.

Rachel P.: I think that a lot of what makes a good friend is having someone who is there for you, who supports you.

Emma F.: My best friend has always been there for me and reached out to me. When I left high school to attend homeschool, she started texting me. She's like, "Hey, what are you up to? We should hang out." And I didn't really have that many friends at the time, and so we just ended up being best friends. She always knows when I'm feeling sad. Somehow, I don't know how, but she just always knows.

"Be excited to see your friends."

What makes true friendship different from popularity?

Seth H.: Friendship is personal, popularity is impersonal. At our school we tend to group people into "popular people," based on their sports ability or maybe, for guys, how many girlfriends they've had. But I think you can have many really good friendships. So if you're nice, you're likely popular too. I think the people that stay popular the longest are the ones that are good friends.

Emma B.: I think it's the way you treat other people, because I've known a lot of popular people that were really rude, and they weren't very good friends with very many people. But then I've also known some really popular people who were nice to everybody. I think that's a big difference. I think it's just the attitude you have. You can't think of people as less than you—because they're not.

Isaac P.: I think if you have good friends, they're going to be friends with you no matter what others think about you. That's what you do when you're friends.

Grace S.: Friends stick together and are trustworthy.



How Do Your Friends Support You?

Hannah P.: I've had friends come to my performances for my show choir when I was in it.

Andrew S.: My friend helped me incredibly with football.

Bella F.: For a religious studies class we went on a trip to a Church meetinghouse, and all the missionaries were there. It was fun. I also thought it was a really good way to choose who my good friends were going to be because you could tell who really respected other people's religions. They'd say things like, "Oh, so you don't swear?" And they'd say, "OK, great, I won't swear around you" and stuff like that. We talked about how we don't drink coffee and stuff, and they said, "OK, we don't have to go to coffee shops." They were just all really respectful.

Emma B.: My friends have just been so open to talking about my religion and saying things like, "You know what, I don't necessarily believe what you believe, but I'm totally open to understand so I can know what you know and what you believe in so I can help you stay strong."

Calvin B.: Since I moved, I haven't really met anyone at school. So all I know are people at church. When we're all at a youth activity, they're nice to me.

Emma F.: When I first moved here, I didn't have very many LDS friends because there weren't that many young women in our ward. I ended up making one friend at an LDS youth convention, and that made all the difference for me in coming to activities. And so she introduced me to her friends, and eventually I had LDS friends, which is helpful.

"They are respectful of other people's religions."



"The end of the first day, everyone already knew my name."



Find Friends Who Value Things That Matter Most

"Essential to your success and happiness is the advice 'Choose your friends with caution.' We tend to become like those whom we admire, and they are usually our friends. We should associate with those who, like us, are planning not for temporary convenience, shallow goals, or narrow ambition—but rather with those who value the things that matter most, even eternal objectives."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Be Thou an Example," Apr. 2005 general conference.

How Do You Create Friendships?

William S.: When one person says hi, and you end up talking, eventually you become friends.

James P.: For me, it's making friends through activities. Like when I went to America on a holiday, I went to the Brigham Young University soccer camp, and I didn't know anyone there. And then at the end of the first day, everyone already knew my name. So just doing activities and going to lunch or helping each other.

Seth H.: Mutual interest—you're interested in the same things as someone else. Doing practical things together is how you start friendships.

A True Friend . . .

Grace S.: A true friend is someone who knows about you.

Andrew S.: A true friend is someone who you can always rely on.

James P.: I think that they are understanding.

Leighton H.: You can be confident in yourself around them.

Calvin B.: A true friend is supportive.


What Have You Learned From True Friends?

Aaron M.: Be true to yourself. You're not going to get real friends when you're not being yourself. If they don't like your standards, then they're not really your friend and not really there for you.

Isaac P.: Listen to what they say. If they're talking, don't ignore what they're saying. Just really focus on them and be there for them.

Emma B.: Something that a good friend does is invite you to things. Even just asking how you're doing. Just asking little questions, as well. The little things are the things that matter.

James P.: You also could be a bit more open, inviting people in your friend group and then meeting other friends. You can still be a good friend. **NE**



“Really focus on them and be there for them.”