

Building a Friendship

Saturday AM

True friendships are like street lights along the road; they don't make the distance any shorter, but they light up the path and make the walk worthwhile. ~Unknown

Who is a good candidate to be a friend? Gordon MacDonald asks the following questions:

- Who coaches you?
- Who stretches your mind?
- Who listens to and encourages your dreams?
- Who will protect you?
- Who are those who share your tears?
- Who rebukes you?
- Who among your happy few enjoys fun times with you?
- Who is it that seeks after God with you?

There's a paradox here in that we build the strongest relationships and the deepest feelings of attachment by prompting someone to talk about themselves. But the crucial difference between allowing someone else to perform for you and building a real friendship is genuine, reciprocal interest. ~Maria Baer

Steps for Building a Friendship (as a Beginner):

1. Show up regularly at the same event.
2. Go for "micro-wins."
3. Choose activities that have a built-in distraction.
4. Be an active listener.
5. Give yourself an exit strategy.

Suggestions for Raising the Bar With Friendships (Picking up Speed):

1. Just do it.
2. Be yourself.
3. Get to know the other person.
4. Find what you have in common.
5. Love them well.

Strategies for Taking Friendship to the Next Level (Keeping It Going):

- Be curious.
- Believe the best.
- Express concern.
- Share your life.

The Six Conversations

1. Social.

Sample questions:

1. What new friends have you made recently?
2. Who is the person in your life right now that is a role model for you?
3. What is a question you like people to ask you?

4. *Who is the oldest person you know and what is intriguing about them?*
5. *If you could invite anyone over for dinner this week, who would it be and why would you want to have dinner with them?*

2. Emotional.

Sample questions:

1. *What has been causing the most stress in your life lately?*
2. *What has been going really well for you recently?*
3. *Where do you feel you need the most courage currently?*
4. *What are you looking forward to this week?*
5. *Have you felt any joy lately?*

3. Physical.

Sample questions:

1. *What have you been doing lately to invest in your health?*
2. *What works best for you to relax?*
3. *Have you tried any new restaurants lately?*
4. *What is your exercise routine currently?*
5. *How did you sleep last night?*

4. Cognitive.

Sample questions:

1. *Why do you think that is true?*
2. *How did you come up with that idea?*
3. *What are some different ways to think about this?*
4. *When did you first start thinking about this?*
5. *What is your favorite thing to think about? What helps you stop thinking about it?*

5. Volitional.

Sample questions:

1. *What's next for you?*
2. *Why did you choose to do that?*
3. *What process do you go through prior to making a major decision?*
4. *What is a big decision that you have made that you regret?*
5. *What can you control in this situation and what is out of your control?*

6. Spiritual.

Sample questions:

1. *Is your relationship with God something that's important to you?*
2. *Are you a churchgoer?*
3. *What was your religious background growing up?*
4. *What does your spiritual tradition say about Jesus?*
5. *Who or what do you turn to for meaning or how to make sense of it all?*