



Top Eight Characteristics Of True Friends

Over the years, I have observed people who are real friends and people who claim to be friends. As I get older, I truly believe the old saying that you can count your real friends on one hand. So, you may be asking what makes a person a real friend. I have identified my top eight characteristics of what I feel constitutes a true friend, or what I feel I need most in a friendship. In observing your relationships with other people, whether they are family members, people you went to school with, coworkers, or colleagues, how many of them are real friends? How many of them possess the following characteristics I feel contribute to or reflect real friendships?

1. Friends listen. Whether you are relating a good or bad experience, friends listen. They don't interrupt or try to make suggestions or recommendations. They simply listen, letting you get everything off your chest. When you have vented, they may offer feedback or have a suggestion, but they also acknowledge that you have to follow what is in your heart.
2. Friends don't judge. No matter what you have done or what you are doing, friends may express their sentiments or offer their perspective, but they strive not to make any type of judgment. After all, they are not in your shoes and may have no idea what you are experiencing.
3. Friends don't abuse you. They won't belittle, or swear or yell at you. They don't like to fight; they would rather discuss and work through difficult issues and situations. They don't hit you. Abuse is not love; it is a form of control. Friends don't try to control each other.
4. Friends are there for you. Whether you are happy or sad, excited or exhausted, friends are always available. If you need to talk, they will listen, regardless of how long you talk or what time of day it is. If you are silent, they will sit next to you until you're ready to speak. Whether they go with you for a walk or hold you while you cry, they are there for you.
5. Friends accept you for who you are. They don't try to make you the kind of person they think you should be, they just accept you. They accept you whether you're having a good or bad day, whether you are loud and boisterous or shy and quiet, whether you are always early or late, whether you are organized and clean or unorganized and sloppy, or whether you are fashionable or frumpy. Real friends look beyond these things, as they are trivial in the long range. They simply accept you for who you are, and love you anyhow.
6. Friends can pick up where they left off, regardless of the time and distance that separates them. Real friends can go months without speaking, but when they do, it seems like yesterday. It doesn't matter who calls who, or who called who last, they are just glad to hear from each other. Time and distance can't separate real friends.

7. Friends understand that friendship is a two-way street. When one friend has a bad day, the other will listen, knowing that when they have a bad day, their friend will be there for them. Friends listen to each other, share ideas and stories, brainstorm, and solve problems together. Their relationship is not one-sided; they both give and take.
8. Friends enjoy each other. When you are with a real friend, time passes quickly. You laugh, share stories and experiences, do things together, and like to be together. Friends are your favorite people to hang out with, as you really like them as people. They are stimulating and fun, not boring.

After reading the above characteristics, how many of these are important to you in your relationships? Are there other characteristics you desire or need in friendships? Whatever you desire or need most, make a list of those characteristics and see how many of your “friends” have them. In conducting this exercise, you may find that you're satisfied with your current friends or you may reassess what true friendship is. Either way, you deserve friends that listen, don't judge you, don't abuse you, are there for you, except you for you who you are, don't let time and distance stand in the way, understand that friendship is a two-way street, and enjoy you.

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