
FRONT COVER:

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Foreword

We have often come across the adage—*A person is known by the company they keep*. Almost every language on planet earth has some kind of equivalent to this proverb.

This is clear indication of how important it is to choose the right friends. In fact, we could extrapolate this statement and say that it is important to choose the right kind of people to be around with.

In this eBook, we are going to deal with this concept right from the basics. We are going to see the importance of hobnobbing with the right people, making the right friends, and we are going to go more basic than that and see how we should win people over and influence them. What makes this eBook different is that we are going to specifically target 21st Century friendship.

Yes indeed! Friendship has changed drastically in modern times. No more is it about having people physically present around you to qualify as friends... in fact, people who you have never met could have a lasting friendship with you. The Internet, and more recently the Web 2.0 phenomenon, has drastically changed how the world perceives friendship.

As you browse through the pages of this eBook, you may go through a gamut of emotions. You may feel happy for having the right friends, and you may feel despondent about not having the right friends. You may see that the people around you are well-meaning and beneficial to you, and you may see that some of them are not quite what they appear. In any case, we are going to tell you how you can make the

most of what you have and have the right people to move around with.

Get started. This eBook could well be a journey of self-discovery for you. All the best!

***The Social Bible Of Winning Friends And Influencing
People In The 21st Century***

***Transformational Lessons Enabling Anyone To Find
Fulfilling Relationships And Developing Getting Along
With People From All Walks Of The Modern Life***

Chapter 1:

Human Beings Are Social Creatures

Synopsis

We learned in school that human beings are social creatures, just as ants or bees are. We cannot live in solitude. We have to live in company of other people. People who live in desolation are considered to be aberrant and the world does not take to them kindly. At the same time, people who live in the company of others do not always know how they can make the most of it.



Human Beings Are Social Creatures

Human beings are often described as social creatures. We are almost never found alone, and even when we are physically alone, we are constantly thinking about other people in our lives. When was the last time you thought of a plan that did not include anyone else? When was the last time you saw a dream in which there were no other people but you? It does not happen that way with us. Everything that we do, consciously or otherwise needs to have other people in it. That is the way nature has ordained us to be.

From the point that we are born till our last breath, we want people to be around us. Maybe the only time in our lives when we do not want people to be with us is when we are sleeping, but even that is not entirely true, is it? Even when we sleep ‘alone’, we want other people to sleep in the same room as us. How many people should I tell you about who would not get a wink of sleep at night if they had to sleep alone in a room!

But, what I feel most amazing about this socialness of our behavior is that we can induce habits in other people. The way we live—the social part of our living—influences other people whether we want that to happen or not. It actually brings about a change in their lives, however small that might be.

There was a phase in my life when my family was living in a lush countryside, verdant with all the green one could find. This was an idyllic place to live and I really enjoyed the few years I spent in that sylvan retreat. Now, everything was truly mesmerizing about that place, but there was one thing that irked me in my initial days there. I always like to start my mornings with a hot cup of coffee and a crisp newspaper that still carries the smell of the printing press to read. It is just my habit. I am not very fond of getting to know what's happening in the world outside—I rely more on the Internet for that—but the newspaper is a childhood habit that I cannot break even now. So, when I was living in that beautiful house, everything was quite sufficient for my needs, but my regular supply of the newspaper was brutally truncated. No newspaper vendor could foot it out that much just to deliver a paper to my house, though the nearby village had a good supply of it.

When I could take it no more, I went out to the village one evening and found out the newspaper delivery boys in the area. I spoke to a few of them and asked them to deliver a newspaper to my house. It took some convincing and even then the first few of them refused. But eventually, I managed to find one guy who agreed to come there every morning to deliver the newspaper.

Next morning was pure heavenly bliss. I have another nasty habit—that of waking up at 6 a.m. on the dot each morning, and by 6:15, this fellow was cycling up to my driveway and plopped the newspaper, perfectly aimed at my porch. Coffee tasted better that day.

In the three months that I stayed there after that, the boy did not miss out a single delivery. Perhaps I had convinced him too much, telling him how I could not start my day well without reading the Daily Times. Anyway, the Good Lord bless him, he never missed a day.

On the day of my moving out, I made it a point to meet him in the morning, take his last delivery to my house personally and I cleared his dues. He went without a word.

A few weeks later, I happened to visit that village again. I chanced into that young chap. He was looking older already—young boys have an amazing way of looking different every week. I asked him how he was doing. What he said floored me.

He said that my moving out had taken a huge toll on him. Seeing that I was nonplussed, he told me how my habit of needing the newspaper early in the morning forced him to get up even earlier than that, and how that helped him revise his college lessons (he was learning to be a doctor). He said that it had become a habit for him to get up on the dot, cycle out to my place with the newspaper, deliver some other newspapers on the way, and then go right home and start studying. After I left, he did not need to get up that early, and because of that he became lazier about his sleeping patterns. He started getting up later and later each day (his mental clock told him constantly that he did not need to get up early) and slowly he gave up delivering newspapers altogether. Eventually, he reduced his studying hours as well.

I was amazed at what he told me. I did not know how an idiosyncrasy of mine could create a habit in someone else.

This little incident told me that everything that we do... without exception... has an impact on people around us.

We are the sum total of the people we live with. They are our identifiers; the whole concept of individual identity is a myth. Our identities are so closely connected with the people we live with that we cannot talk about it in absolute terms as well.

Think about it. Don't people in your home do things for us, and in the process develop their own habits? A mother who gets up early to prepare her son's school lunch is altering her habit because of her son. If you wait for someone to go to the gym together, then you are changing your habit according to their routine. And, don't even get me started about the relationships of love where people change themselves for each other so dramatically that there is no concept of individuality at all.

We need people around us to help us. We need them to do our small and big tasks, and we do things for us as well. We need people to live with us. We need people to share our thoughts and ideas with. We need people to go to work with, to study with, to exercise with. These are things we do not—and cannot—do alone.

And, at the same time, we know that we have to do things for them too. Though we accept it or not, at every living instant of our day, we are doing things with others in mind. You work for money probably, but at the end of the day you know that whatever it is you are selling is a requirement for someone. Businesses would not have existed on earth if we had not been social beings.

Friendship is just a small part of being social; it is just one aspect. But in the 21st Century, the implication of friendship has become much wider, as we are going to see in the subsequent chapters. It is no longer necessary that “a friend in need is a friend indeed”. The definition has now gone beyond ‘need’. Friendship is now the epitome of our very lives itself.

Chapter 2:

Know What a Friend Is—21st Century Friendship

Synopsis

It can definitely be said that the concept of friendship has changed remarkably over the last few years. Friends don't need to be with you all the time anymore. You don't need to hang out together to be called friends. Why, today, people who have never met can still be friends!

Confused? Read on...

Knowing What a Friend Is—21st Century Friendship

The concept of friendship has undergone a renaissance of sorts. Our previous generation, when they would announce someone as their friend, it usually meant that they were together at school or work, and that they spent a lot of time together. It usually meant they were people with at least a few similar tastes and interests and who hung around together. In those times, people made friendships for a particular reason—because they were in school or at work together or that they lived in the same neighborhood. Hardly did their friends go out of their niche!

But that was the time of compartmentalization. Friends, like everything else, were compartmentalized. We had school friends, college friends, office friends, church friends, soccer friends and so on. It is funny even to think of that now. In today's times, such slotting is definitely not possible. You may meet your friend in a particular place, but it is not necessary that they will stay there. They will soon spill out to other areas of your life as well. This is how friendship is in today's world... they do not stay put in just one area of your life; they spread out all over the place.

The networks run deeper as well. It is more likely that a 'school' friend of yours knows your office colleague and so on. The exclusiveness factor just does not exist anymore.

Why has this radical shift happened? To a very great extent, the Internet is responsible for it. Today, we are all very active on social networking websites, whether it is Facebook or MySpace or Twitter. We are all over the place. These social networking websites are such that they show the whole world who your friends are. You cannot keep them hidden anymore. Soon enough, someone is going to see someone they know and other network starts building right then and there. The Internet has made our personal lives so public that immediately everyone knows what's going on with us.

It is not that these networks did not exist in the past. They did. The only issue was that in those days we did not have the social networking websites that we have today. For that reason, people whom we knew through somewhere remained there. They did not get to know much about the private part of our lives and hence they did not get to know much about the other people associated with us.

So, has it become easier to win friends and influence people in the 21st Century? Well, it has definitely become much easier to make friends today. You can expand your own network, you can make your friend's friends your friends, you can even find out people who are interested in you so very directly. It has become very easy to find friends and send them requests, and they will accept as well.

But, has it become to influence friends? This is actually the part of the story that we have to concern ourselves with more. We have friends all around us today, but we will have to put in some effort in order to influence them. The influencing part isn't going to happen just like

that; you have to do some work there. At the same time, I am not telling you that it is not possible or even that it is difficult. It is not. In fact, you can influence people much easier today because you have so many platforms to play your game. But, you need to know how to go about it the right way.

Today's friends are different because:-

- They do not confine themselves to just one part of your life,
- They know you much better than ever before, even some of your most intimate things,
- You know them much better because of the same reasons,
- They are a part of a network,
- They may not have ever met you in the flesh and blood,
- They can spell opportunities for you like never before,
- They are more technologically-savvy, as are you,
- They are not necessarily part of the same culture that you are,
- It is not necessary that you share your likes and dislikes with them, and so many other reasons.

That is why winning friends and influencing them requires a totally different approach today as well. We are going to spend a lot of time on this aspect—that of influencing people. Anyone can make friends, but retaining them is a challenge. Slowly, we are going to unravel the secrets of that to you.

Chapter 3:

Friends at Work Vs. Real Friends

Synopsis

Before we embark on the actual task of winning friends and influencing them, it is important that you can identify who your real friends are. You need to distinguish them from another popular category—work friends.



Friends at Work Vs. Real Friends

We often mistake acquaintances for friends. This happens in several cases. One of the most common cases is when we mistake our work acquaintances for real friends. People at work can be made friends, but they are not necessarily friends by default. Thinking that work people are friends is a notion that has its roots in our past way of thinking. We used to think that anyone we spent time with was a friend. That is not necessarily true.

The intention of the eBook is to tell you how you can win friends and influence people in today's times. Though that is not very difficult to do, one of the essential first steps is to know how to recognize a friend. Hence, you should know what qualities 'do not' make a friend as well. Here, we have taken work friends as an example. But, the discussion applies to any other kinds of friends as well.

In order to be able to effectively make friends and influence people, you should have an innate understanding to realize who your true friends are, and who are simply your 'work' friends.

Who Can You Count on?

Earlier, I said that the proverb 'A friend in need is a friend indeed' does not hold much water in today's times, and I stand behind that point. But, at the same time, there is no refuting the part that it is

important for you to know who of your friends will stand with you in those bleak, difficult times.

Indeed, a true friend is someone who can help you in times of adversity. Now, think about your friends at work and your other friends. Suppose you have a financial problem. You need some money urgently. Who will you approach?

Think about this point. If necessary, write this on a piece of paper. Then circle the names of all those people who you can bank on... the people who you will not hesitate in calling up if you are passing through lean times. There will be people who you know won't bother to dirty their hands to remove you from the tight spot, but then there will also be people who are ready to help you. It is these indications that can help you separate the wheat from the chaff.

Who Will Be with You?

When you think about who your real friends are, it is a good idea to think ahead. Think about the person two years down the lane. What do you think—will they still be in contact with you? With most friends we make in schools, colleges and at our workplace, the friendship is only because we are doing something together. Once that common bond is broken, it usually happens that the contact itself is lost, let alone the friendship. Is that going to happen? If it is, then perhaps you should not consider this relationship as true friendship.

A true friend is one who will be with you beyond the barriers of time, irrespective of what phase of life you are in. Though they might not be physically present with you anymore, they will surely keep in touch. And now, there are so many more options to stay in touch.

What Do You Know about Your Friend's Family?

This is another factor that tells you how close your friendship is. Usually when we meet people at school, college or at the workplace, we take it for granted that they are our friends without ever realizing how little we know about their lives outside the common place that you share.

For example, how much do you know about the family of this person? Do you know about their likes and dislikes? Do you know what places they hang out? Do you know any of their other friends?

If your answer to these questions is negative, then what you have is merely an acquaintance. You cannot call it as a friendship.

A truly friendly person will let you get involved in different aspects of their lives as well. They will tell you about their life outside the place where you meet each other. They will talk to you about it. They will also want to know about the other parts of your life.

Remember that true friends always want to know as much as they can about each other.

Do They Regard You Seriously?

The next time you are interacting with any person from your workplace or the place where you study, assess them as to how seriously they regard you. Do they listen to you well? Do they ask you for opinions or suggestions? Do they heed them? Do they ask you about your likes and dislikes, about the way you feel about certain things? Are they interested in you as a person, or are they simply interested in being with you?

If the former is true, then they are good friends of you. You have found someone that takes an interest in you and regards you with the seriousness that you deserve. But, if they are only interested in being with you, then it is a selfish motive that they are after. They just want your company. They are not interested in you as a person, so the fundamental grain of friendship does not exist there.

Just as you should be interested in a person for them to be your friend, it is important that they should be interested in you as well. It is a mutual bond.

What Do You Talk about?

This is another interesting way to find out who your true friends are. When you meet your so-called friend outside the place of work or school or college, can you talk to them casually about other things? Or does your conversation with them only entail talking about the activity that you are commonly sharing?

If you are not able to talk anything with them apart from the activity that you are put together forward for, then it is certainly a weak friendship. Good friends never run out of topics to talk about. They never find each other's company awkward or boring.

Do You Feel Happy for Them?

How emotionally attached are you with them? Do you become genuinely happy when something good happens to them, even if it is at your expense? For instance, if both of you were vying for a particular promotion and if they got it, would you still be happy? And, the other way round, if you got the promotion, would they be really happy?

It is how well you can share each other's victories that decide how close you are. If you do not feel the emotion, then there is something that is lacking in the relationship. You cannot call it friendship if the emotional ties are weak.

Do You Plan Things to Do Together?

Another very profound way of finding out whether your friendship is for real or not is to see whether you plan things to do together... and whether you enjoy that! Do the two of you just spend the time you are together because circumstances have thrown you together or do you really plan some things especially? Like, do you plan to go for a movie or visit the library or go shopping, or whatever, apart from your time at the workplace, or school, or college or whatever? And, when you make such a plan, do you enjoy the time you spend together? Can you make good conversation with each other? It all adds up here. If you look forward to do many things with each other, more than what you are supposed to do, then it is a good friendship blossoming there.

Friends who are merely ‘work’ friends would not want to do anything apart from what they are supposed to do—attend the workplace, attend lectures, etc. If it is true friendship, it should go beyond these obligatory things.

So, these are some things that you have to keep in mind when you are assessing your friendship. There are all kinds of people out there and you are going to meet all of them. But, our intention is to strengthen friendships and create an impression on people. Now that you know what the signs of good friendship are, you know what you have to aim for.

You have to aim for a friendship that goes beyond just meeting and spending time together just because you have to. It extends to thinking about the other person with concern, knowing about the other part of their family in which you are not present, knowing what makes them happy or sad, what their personal likes and dislikes are, being happy in their happiness, etc. This is what you have to look forward to. Friendship is a sublime thing, but developing it till it reaches that stage requires continuous effort.



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