

CAYCE ON: Making & Keeping Friends

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Harmon Bro with Edgar Cayce

A FRIEND IS SOMEONE with whom we can be wholly ourselves, without the fear of being criticized or judged. Yet, we can trust that same friend to tell us if we're out of line—and a friend will do so without making us feel bad. Equally, we give ear to the counsel of a true friend, weighing it carefully. We may resist or reject counsel if it comes charged with guilt, shame, or judgment, even if it's the right counsel. But without these negatives, the counsel can directly enter our hearts. Such friendships are to be cherished.

Studies have shown that, among the many physical and emotional health benefits, those who have friends outlive those who don't. There's a special kind of love, camaraderie, and emotional support that's unique to friendships.

On more than a few occasions, some have confided in me that they don't have true or deep friendships, although they're sociable and have many friends or acquaintances. A 2015 article on friendship in *Time* magazine states that, according to data from General Social Survey (GSS), "the number of Americans who say they have no close friends has roughly tripled in recent decades. 'Zero' is also the most common response when people are asked how many confidants they have, the GSS data shows. And adult men seem to be especially poor in keeping and cultivating friendships." In 2015 *The Telegraph* reported that 2.5 million men in the U.K. have no close

friends that they could turn to for help or advice in a crisis. So why is that?

For starters, some people are working two to three jobs to make ends meet, and others may have serious illnesses that can isolate them and leave no time or energy to invest in friendships. But what about the rest? Perhaps, many are too busy with other priorities: they are workaholics or staying current on their TV shows, playing computer games or they have time-consuming hobbies. Some may have simply become too self-reliant while others may withhold from opening up, because they feel too vulnerable. Edgar Cayce told a 26-year-old woman that, she very seldom takes anyone into her "closest confidence"—even those she "holds most dear." This creates loneliness. (5246-1) Fortunately, this can be changed.

MAKING FRIENDS

There is no formula for making friends, just as there is no formula for falling in love. It happens and friendships grow. We can make friends at any time in our lives—and practically anywhere. Here are some characteristics that we can cultivate in ourselves, the effect of which can add to our lives sure and lasting friendships.

Be Friendly: The first thing we need to know is: "If ye would have friends, be friendly!" (792-1) Cayce repeatedly said this to different people about making friends. It isn't merely an idiom, but a truth to be practiced. (2443-1)

Affability will naturally attract friends.

A frowning face will drive away people, but a genuine smile welcomes all—a theme that Cayce emphasized: "Smile often, for *smiling* is catching - but sadness drives away," (518-1) and "*smile!* For what else in God's creation can?" (294-185) To make friends, Cayce advised us to follow Jesus' pattern: "Have a cheery smile for *everyone!* Condemn *no one!*" (315-5) Add good-natured humor, and it'll be all the better.

Be Positive and Appreciative: A negative demeanor, constant heaviness, or finding fault with others can be off-putting. Cayce told a woman that she's "inclined to find fault or to pick holes in another's advice or counsel," philosophy, and manner of expression. (1530-1) Instead of distancing others by parading their shortcomings before them, she needed to stress the positive and give encouragements. Cayce adds, in 1449-2, "Anyone can find fault. It is a wise person who encourages another in the turmoils and strifes of the day."

Another woman was told that she had "a very disturbed outlook," which made her "very lonely." Unable to stand criticism, she apparently took to sarcasm which brought on animosities. Thus, she lacked close friendships. Cayce outlined her abilities and told her to "analyze" herself, and live the truths, which will bring a different outlook. She was told to repeat to herself: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28-20) This would help her to be

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kind, gentle, and friendly, smiling at “the young and the aged.” She was told to “make many days brighter for others.” (5098-1) People feel good around people who think well of them—as long as we’re honestly complimenting and not flattering them.

Make the First Move: People may be reserved or shy, waiting for the other person to make the first move. Never be afraid to be the first to reach out. Give someone a call, or invite her for coffee. No one is so important as to consider himself above making the first gesture of friendship. And such an action isn’t reserved for extroverts. Anyone can do it if there is the desire.

Cultivate the Friendship: As Cayce makes clear in 551-13, we gain friends by giving our time, abilities, money and connections—to a neighbor, stranger and even an enemy! Not in “extravagance” but in the appropriate “expenditure of self.” This will “attract the proper relationships” and create a natural affinity, leading to friendships and personal growth. Such growth comes from the counsel taken and given, as we gently push, prod, and challenge each other.

To cultivate friends, unquestionably we need to put forth some effort. Call, email, write a card—do whatever comes naturally. Any good relationship is based on the law of reciprocity, which builds regard for each other.

A friendship propped up by one person is a one-way street. A woman asked Cayce:

“(Q) What arrangements can be made for Mr. [...]? (A) Let him look out for himself! He hasn’t regarded thee!” (1695-4)

Reciprocity doesn’t mean that we’re trying to court favors for favors given, which Cayce, in 3226-1, told a woman was her stumbling block in making friends. She felt her friends had forgotten to give help when she needed it. She was told to show herself friendly without harboring such thoughts and she would have friends.

We can also take advantage of natural opportunities that may arise from friendships, without taking advantage of a

friend, as was indicated in 380-1: Do “... *not use* friendships, or *abuse* them;...” Friendships are made for friendship’s sake, and not for any perceived benefits.

Show an Interest: Take a genuine interest in others. Cayce told a man: if we’re interested only in ourselves, we defeat many of our own purposes. Take interest in something that interests the other person, “to meet every individual on his own ground.” This will even bring “physical rest...by the change or trend of thought.” (257-60) Thus, we move from mundane transactions or contacts—a farmer, a nurse, or a neighbor—to really getting to know someone. If there are mutual interests, all the better. We can build from there, for friendship “is a growing thing.” (1215-4) And some of those “strange relationships...make for the strongest friendships.” (348-14) However, we also ought to choose our friends wisely, since “evil company corrupts.” (1 Cor. 15:33)

Communicate and be Agreeable: Timely communication builds friendship, and communication also requires that we listen and listen fully before giving our opinion. Cayce counseled: “Act twice... [before speaking] once; for you have two hands and two feet—but only one tongue. You have two eyes, two ears, and *still* one tongue. Hear and see twice as much as thou speakest.” (340-29)

Frivolous comments and thoughtless replies don’t contribute to developing solid friendships. This was evident in reading 622-7 in which a man asked how he could secure “the bonds of mutual friendship” with a particular individual. Cayce replied, adding, “where there is disagreement, do not attempt to convince one another of the veracity of the other as concerning such.”

Be Sincere and Open: When a man had concerns about a friend’s questionable actions, Cayce advised him to not harbor doubts, but: “Be frank. Be open, and any condition arising between friends should be treated as friends, for with friends, and real friends, there is no *necessity* of any condition being hidden. To others it does not matter.” (4586-3)

Celebrate: Take joy in others’ achievements. Say something nice, congratulate, raise a toast. Be genuinely happy for the other person. But we should not turn the conversation into self-pity for our lack of such achievements or be boastful of our own. In friendship, there is no competition.

A woman asked Cayce why she was “so often disappointed in friends who seemed to be so fine but turn out to be so terribly selfish and self-centered?” She was seeing her own reflection, Cayce told her, and to change it: work with the ideal and put away condemnation. (2783-1) We could say that, rather than celebrating something good in the other, she was focused on what she didn’t get. The key phrase in her question is, “so often.” If something happens so often, then it’s usually something within us. If it’s seldom, then we may indeed be facing a self-centered individual.

Be Dependable and Empathetic: Close friends are those who we can count on, especially during difficult times. In the biblical story of Job, when he lost everything and became severely ill, his three friends showed up “to mourn with him and to comfort him.” When they saw him from afar and beheld his condition, “they lifted their voices and wept.” Later they gave him counsel and reflected on his mental anguish and outlook. The counsel may not have been on target, but in doing so, they played a vital role in giving him a safe environment to voice his distress, suffering, and mental anguish, “to get it off his chest.” This was likely cathartic. It’s through this deep engagement with his friends, along with the counsel of a man named Elihu, that Job came to correct his thinking towards his suffering, and ultimately towards God. The result was reconciliation with God leading to a complete restoration of his health and wellbeing.

Judge No One: The attitude of non-judgment radiates the right “vibrations” from us, even when there may be disagreements. Those who are attuned to the same ideal, vibrate and create a tone of the same frequency, making for a heart-to-heart connection, as Cayce made clear

Those who have true friendships are blessed, for “there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24)



The three amigos: A.R.E. friends Peter Woodbury, Paul Mazza, and Jon Shatat

in 2842-2. Such are special friends who truly love us for who we are. Cayce told one person that, though she chooses few as her friends, her “innate tenderness of love, affection or sympathy” make her a true friend. (1286-1)

Be Discreet: Topics discussed between friends must be kept confidential. Friends feel free to share with each other deeper matters—matters, we might say, that are “just between friends.” Without discretion, trust and friendship erode. Cayce told someone that “when confidences are broken, there is... [created] a wounded feeling or experience, hard to be met or understood.” But, he reminds us, although “shortcomings, broken confidences, false friendships, are ever to be abhorred,” we shouldn’t condemn the friend. (6-2)

These are expressions of love, not techniques to win friends. And the expressions help us to mature in love.

FALLING OUT

A falling out with a friend or becoming estranged may happen in the most well-meaning of friendships. When a woman asked Cayce about her estrangement from a former friend, Cayce answered: “No individual entity has so many friends that it can afford ever to lose a single one. Go to thy friend, find the cause and correct same.” He told her that this same pattern happened in an earlier incarnation between them in France, concluding, “Let’s undo

those things neglected there.” (3234-1) However, when we have reached out to someone who refuses to reconcile, we can let go with an attitude of “loving indifference.” (See my article titled, *Loving Indifference*, *Venture Inward Newsletter*, Winter 2010.)

A 63-year-old woman was told in her life reading that she had a lifetime during the time of Jesus, and heard his teaching in Bethsaida. It was here that this woman’s child was set before the Master to be blessed. Jesus used this opportunity to give a lesson to all, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He took the little child and said, “Unless ye become as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter in.” Cayce said that this means: “Unless you become as open-minded, unless you can get mad and fight and then forgive and forget,” you are not making any spiritual progress. “For it is the nature of man to fight, while it is the nature of God to forgive.” (3395-3)

With this lesson in mind, it’s not so much whether there are misunderstandings between friends or that there are even fights, but rather that we are willing to say sorry and mean it, and are able to get back to being friends again. Such actions are a conscious choice to love for love’s sake, which overcomes the condition at hand rather than allowing conditions to overwhelm us. Thus, as Cayce admonishes us in 3395-3, we operate from the motivating influences of “the pure, the simple, the beautiful,” in all our associations.

Friendship—A Final Word

Friendship is a sacred relationship. Ultimately, we are to become friends with God. We learn that pattern on Earth and must recognize that how we treat others is how we treat God. (1000-8, 3395-3) Cayce puts forth a challenge: As a friend, be the *best* friend. So how may we do this? We can follow the pattern of Jesus who was friendly to all—those in high places, the lowly, outcasts, sinners, and spiritual seekers. Friendships grow by showering love upon others, which Jesus so well demonstrated, without lessening the love for any. Cayce encouraged: “You have a friend in Him,” “take hold upon Him,” to gain strength and courage. Consequently, our expressions will be “as the pearl of great price—a smile, a loving touch, a tender word.” (951-4, 1610-2, 1789-7) Cayce paraphrased two biblical passages, placing them together, “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother; yea, a friend that would lay down his very life that another might know the way of truth—and life.” (1173-11) This, of course, is what Jesus did.

Though time and care go into growing friendships, it can feel effortless even when there are differences of opinion. A close friend may let us down at times, but she’s still a close friend. We simply enjoy being with her. That’s why, in a true friendship we come away nourished, satisfied, and happy. It’s the simple joy of sharing, of laughing heartily, of grieving together, or recalling memories. And the memories can be rich and varied—of the silly things we said and did, an embarrassing moment recalled, or a mistake made, or of a time when the grace of God touched us. And though our lives might have taken off in different directions, somehow the bond of friendship is sustained and deepened. Life is a whole lot richer and more robust with friends. 🌟

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