

4 Types of Friends That Will Make Your Life Better

We live in this weird time where everything is online to be seen, misinterpreted, exaggerated and envied. If someone posts a picture of his latest culinary creation, night out with friends or time alone at the coffee shop, our first thought is to compare his life to our own.

Even a person's friendships are out there for our scrutiny.

We analyze how many friends someone has, how often they get together and whether they do or don't include their children. The fact is that there is not a magic number of friends a person needs.

Iron Sharpens Iron

There are, however, some key characteristics needed in friendship.

Scripture tells us that iron sharpens iron (Prov. 27:17). We need to surround ourselves with people who encourage us, challenge us and make us better. There are four types of friends who can enrich our lives. These can be found in multiple people or just a couple. If you find all of them in one individual, hold on to him. He is more precious than gold.

1. The grace giver. There is no way around it. We're going to mess up in big, embarrassing ways. We're going to speak out of turn. We're going to stand someone up. We're going to hurt someone's feelings. Everyone needs a friend that is generous with grace. There has to be a friend who has nothing but love.

2. The truth teller. This is the friend that you don't always

appreciate at the time but is so needed. This is that person who will tell you when your attitude is out of whack or your priorities are out of line. It isn't always pretty, but it's precious. Flattery may feel good, but a truth-teller can be trusted. This is the person who will tell you when your hair is too big, your jeans are too tight or your contribution to Wednesday night supper was less than stellar.

3. The couch counselor. Lots of people will open their hearts to you. They will listen intently and pray faithfully. It takes a special person, however, who opens their home to you. When someone is willing to put their agenda aside and make some coffee, real relationships are formed.

4. The burden bearer. When writing to "the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi" (Phil. 1:1), Paul's desire was that they would be striving side-by-side and not frightened in anything (Phil. 1:27-28). If there was some striving and some opportunities to be frightened of, it's safe to say that there were some trials and painful experiences going on in their lives. We all need a friend that will walk side-by-side with us through our trials.

Friendship is such a tricky thing.

I think back to my mom sitting on the front porch snapping fresh green beans with the neighbor and wonder when it all got so complicated. When did friendship become a competition?

Friendship doesn't always look like it does on the sitcoms, but that doesn't make it any less of a friendship. If it works for you, I say, "Pass the coffee and carry on."

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