

5 Deep Questions to Discern if Your Friends Are Good for You

Chaplain Ronnie Melancon said, "Show me your friends and I'll show you your future." As a believer, I think everyone deserves to be loved and cared for. In fact, Jesus said that loving the unlovely is required of anyone who follows Him (Matt. 5:45-48). Yet, who we let influence us determines much of our life's ultimate destination.

Why Is It Hard for You to Let Go of the Fools?

Solomon wrote, "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm" (Prov. 13:20). The apostle Paul echoed his sentiment when he said, "Bad company corrupts good morals," (1 Cor. 15:33).

If our inner circle of influence is so important, then why do so many of us hang around with fools? I think the answer is threefold:

1. We don't know how to set boundaries with people. What I mean is, we are terrified of offending them, and so we are the victims of other people's desires. We feel the need to accommodate everyone, and consequently, other people dictate our destiny!

2. We don't know who we are, so hanging out with fools feels comfortable, familiar and even reassuring. Reassuring in that being in the company of little people can make us feel big, but it's comparative righteousness. The standard we are using to measure our progress is deceptive.

Greatness isn't a factor of comparison, but rather the result of our inner nobility which is proactively cultivated in

secret; while nobody is watching. Small people are defined by the fact that they compare themselves, by themselves, which ultimately relegates them to the size of the crowd.

Most of us are unaware that best-friending complainers, grumblers, victims and pessimists is infecting our expectations and derailing our destiny.

3. Often the biggest challenge we encounter is that birds of a feather flock together. If we grew up on a chicken farm, we tend not to know any eagles. Furthermore, eagles are pretty selective about who they let nest next to them—that's why they are eagles. So finding new, healthy friends can be a slow grueling process.

Making Good Friends Is Often a Process

"Great, Kris. That's a lot for nothing," you protest!

Okay, wait a minute before you get your hemorrhoids in a knot. I said it's tough to make friends with noble people, but it's not impossible. It probably will take a proactive strategy, so let me give you a few insights that might make it easier:

1. Great people are not necessarily famous or public people. Trying to befriend a famous or public person will greatly narrow your chances of connection. They are usually overly busy. (I think it's important to note here that sometimes our attraction to famous people is unhealthy in that we are trying to get our identity from who we know instead of who we are.)

Many great leaders are unknown by the crowd. It's usually much easier to connect with a noble man or woman who doesn't have a public profile. Bill Derryberry is one of my spiritual fathers. He's had a huge impact on my life. He is wise, experienced and always has time for me, yet most people don't know who he is.

2. Noble people want to spend their time wisely, so helping them understand how much you value their input is paramount in connecting with them.

I can't tell you how many times people have asked for my advice then argue with me! Don't ask a person's opinion if you only value people who agree with you.

Another thing that drives me nuts is when people ask for my input and then don't take any of it. I've given many people books to read, videos to watch and information to research. The next time I meet with them they often haven't done anything I've suggested.

If you want to build a relationship with a great leader, you will need to prove you value their time and honor their input. One time, I gave this guy my book, *The Supernatural Ways of Royalty*. A year later, the dude showed me his book, and every page was filled with highlights and notes. I was blown away by his love for me and his value for my opinion, so I was really glad I gave him the book. I do believe that if you let someone have oversight in your life they will have insight into your soul.

Let me end by saying that to directly affect your success in life, aside from serving Jesus, the single most effective thing you can do is to choose your closest friends wisely.

Ways to Reflect on the Influencers in Your Life

Ask yourself:

1. Are my friends helping me become a better leader?
2. Do I have friends that are more gifted, smarter, and experienced than I am?
3. Did I proactively choose my friends, or was it by happenstance?

4. Are my friends holding me back?

5. Can I name three friends who are making me better?

Your answers to these questions will change you forever! Visit them as your seasons in life change and they'll help you to surround yourself with noble friends instead of fools. Do you struggle with letting go of the fools in your life? How do you plan to work through that? I'd love to hear your thoughts in the comments! {eo}

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This article originally appeared at .