

Why You Might Not Be as Mature a Friend as You Think

All of us no matter how old we may become can still be a child, adolescent or adult in any given area of life. Someone might be 60 and financially or spiritually still a child. Here are the three stages that we can evaluate others and ourselves in the social are of our lives.

1. Social Child

Most of us have been in a relationship with people where we do all the work in the relationship. We always call them, we always set up the activities or events and we basically do all the initiating in the relationship. Weeks, months or years go by and somewhere along the way, it clicks with you that they never call you. It feels like they don't care. Many days or weeks go by, and you are getting really hurt over this.

If you don't initiate back, you are concerned that the relationship may be over and worst of all, the friendship may end silently. This person may not care, or they may be what I call a social child. They just don't initiate in a relationship.

This social child only responds in relationships. This is the person that seems to be constantly dragged along on events, but doesn't lead or necessarily bring others. This is often dangerous, especially in dating. If someone chooses the social child and is willing to do all the work in the relationship, that person might even marry the social child before he/she realizes that their new spouse is a social child who may have no friends at all.

If you are a social child, now would be the best time for you to mature socially. Start initiating equally in relationships. If someone calls you, make sure you call him or her back too.

If someone ask you to go places, come up with some ideas and invite others into your idea. Make sure you are carrying at least 50 percent of the planning in your friendships.

Initiating toward a friendship shows love for them. Making them do all the work in the relationship makes them feel tolerated and unimportant to you. They might interpret your social childlikeness as just self-absorption, so it is wise to grow in this area if you believe that you may be a social child.

2. Social Adolescent

A social adolescent is an improvement over a social child. This person can initiate in a relationship, but this usually revolves around activities that suit them. This person will call you up to go somewhere or do something they want to do. They are usually activity friends.

Social adolescents like someone to keep them company while they do whatever is fun for them. The limitation here is they don't ever really talk about deep issues. They keep things light and may even avoid deeper issues. These social adolescents are fun, but still adolescent.

I liken a social adolescent to a 15-year-old male. They want to have fun, but as far as talking about something of depth, they just grunt and change the subject.

3. A Social Adult

A social adult can initiate in a friendship without the need for activity. They are happy to just hang out together. The time together doesn't need to be productive or activity driven. A social adult is most likely to have long-term relationships. They have accepted the seasons of friendship but are able to stay in touch and say "hi" throughout life.

The social adult will tend to initiate evenly in relationships

and intuitively keep things balanced. They are the kind of friend who, if you bought lunch last time you were together, will make sure they pay this time.

Social adults are more open emotionally to you while maintaining intellectual honesty. They tend to know the balance between giving you insight and criticism. God bless the day you meet other social adults; life seems to be somewhat fuller.

Let's look at Jesus' friendship style. First, He chose his friends; they did not choose him. He tended to pick people in businesses that were already successful in their stage of life. He tended to stay away from people who were religious to the point where they were not honest with themselves.

He had good boundaries, and there were times he needed to be alone and pray, and he was able to ask for his needs to be met. He was honest with his friends. He trusted them with his heart even after Peter's verbal betrayal. Jesus was able to re-enter a relationship that had some hurt and hurdles to overcome.

He was honest with his friends when they were spiritually off. Remember Jesus' response to Peter: "Satan, get behind me?" That might be a little rough for us to do, but you get the point.

Jesus was generous and invited his friends to weddings and other social events. Jesus was fun. He walked on water, took long walks with his disciples and spent time with them in other ways. He was deeply spiritual and almost exclusively hung out with people as friends who had a capacity to be spiritual. Jesus was a good role model in every way, even teaching us how to be great friends.

I hope you enjoyed learning about the social child, adolescent and adult. If you would like to read more about this financial, emotional and spiritual child, adolescent and

adult, read *Intimacy: A 100-Day Guide to Lasting Relationships*.

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