

Would You Want to Be Friends With You?

I spent many years as a very negative person. I have teasingly said that if I thought two positive thoughts in a row my brain got into a cramp! During those years in my life I was lonely and had very few friends. I had no idea why people didn't like me, but I now know that my sour attitude was one of the reasons.

Did you know your thoughts and attitudes have a tremendous impact on those around you and even affect your friendships? A positive attitude *attracts* friends, whereas someone who is negative may find themselves isolated and alone. Like the old saying goes, "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar."

My husband, Dave, has always been a very positive person and a good influence on me in this area. Early in our marriage, I got irritated because he was always cheery and hopeful when life seemed so dark and dreary to me. Although it was frustrating at the time, his behavior eventually caused me to want to change so I could be more positive and enjoy life too.

However, the greatest change came as a result of my relationship with God and studying His Word. Romans 12:2 literally changed my life. It says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Becoming a positive person begins with filling your mind with God's Word and learning to think like *He* thinks ... then choosing to allow these faith-filled thoughts to flow through your words and attitudes to the people around you.

I believe many people who think and speak negatively aren't even aware of how it affects their relationships. Really, the only people who enjoy a negative person are those who are also negative! Anyone who is happy, or wants to be happy, quickly discovers that being with a negative, sour person doesn't bring them joy.

So let me ask you: Are you the kind of person who others want to be friends with? Are you the kind of person *you* want to be friends with?

I want to be the kind of person people are glad to know and call their friend. I want others to be glad when they run into me at the coffee shop and have a few minutes to chat. When I am at a gathering of people, I would like to be sought out by others because they like my attitude and being with me adds to their joy.

I am sure you feel the same way, but we must realize that if we want to have that kind of positive effect on others, we will need to be positive people. I don't think that anyone would say they don't want people to like them, but they must also realize that *nothing good happens accidentally*. If we want to be well-liked, we can choose to be likeable. If we want friends, we can choose to be friendly!

One of the spiritual laws that we are taught in God's Word is that we reap what we sow (Luke 10:27-36; Gal. 6:7). If you want more friends, then sow a seed and choose to be a good friend to someone else!

I once heard that even if people don't remember what you say to them, they do remember how you made them feel. For example, my exercise coach is a very enjoyable, positive, encouraging person, and I always look forward to seeing him. His attitude makes the entire experience pleasant. Even though the exercises themselves are usually difficult, he makes me feel as if I am amazingly strong through his positive comments to

me.

On the other hand, I had another trainer a few years ago who wasn't very positive or encouraging. When he would correct my form, he would do it in a rather negative, condescending way. He actually thought he was helping me, but the truth was that he was discouraging me!

Really, it's pretty simple: If you want friends, be the kind of person other people want to be around—positive, encouraging and uplifting.

If you realize you are negative, or that you have let the disappointments of life sour your attitude, then ask God to start changing you. Facing truth is the doorway to freedom!

As you renew your mind with God's Word and begin to *choose* positive thoughts, words and attitudes, you will become someone that other people want to be around ... *someone they want to call friend.*

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