

Signs of a True Friendship

You may find it easy to find casual acquaintances, but creating good, true friends can prove difficult. You may even think you've found a true friend, only to find that he has ulterior motives. However, you can separate true friendships from false when you look for several telltale characteristics.

Honesty and Encouragement

- True friends will never lie to you or keep the truth from you, even if the truth hurts. They'll offer honest opinions and advice. However, true friends will always keep your feelings in mind and find a way to give you the truth gently. True friends won't use honesty as a tool for tearing you down, only for building you up. They will encourage you to try again when you fail. Even when they must give you negative information, true friends will take care to give you encouragement as well. A true friend's goal for you is a positive self-image and plenty of self-confidence.
- Pay special attention to what others tell you about your friend's behavior when you're not around. True friends don't make snide comments behind your back. A person should tell you directly if they don't like something you did or said. Good friends aren't afraid to be honest.

Acceptance and Understanding

- A true friend accepts who you are and never tries to change you. He also refrains from finding fault in your actions during a difficult situation and tries to put himself in your shoes before offering his perspective. He will never judge or criticize you for any reason. A true friend won't hold grudges or keep track of petty grievances. He will be patient and understanding when you're busy or distracted by pressing matters. He will offer immediate forgiveness for harsh words spoken quickly and refrain from taking things personally.

Attentive

- True friends pay attention to what is going on in your life and make time to keep up with it all. They will listen any time of day or night. They care enough to notice when you seem unusually happy or sad and will want to share both emotions with you. A true friend will remember a big event in your life, such as an important interview, and call to check on the outcome. She'll remember your birthday and your preferences when planning get-togethers. She is able to focus completely on you when the situation warrants it, such as in a time of mourning.

Adaptable and Non-Competitive

- You will never feel like a true friend tries to compete with or one-up you. A true friend, instead, will enthusiastically applaud your accomplishments. She will never project her insecurities onto you or poison your friendship with envy. In addition, a true friend adapts to the constant changes of life. When circumstances change, she won't drift away; instead, she'll find new ways to establish common ground and stay close to you. True friends aren't rigid and inflexible about friendship. They understand that it is a give-and-take situation and are happy to give as much as possible.

How to Spot Fake Friends

As hard as it may be to recognize, there isn't always sincerity that sits behind every smiling face. And in a world where betrayal and deceit is so common it's always best to know the type of people you are associating with and whether or not their good intentions are actually genuine. Fake friends exist just as much, if not more, than real friends.

Below are a few ways to tell if you are dealing with a fake friend.

- **Selfish Behavior**

Fake friends tend to be very one-dimensional. They think about their needs and are very oblivious to the needs of others. They only call you when they want or need something and they are very unapologetic about it. If your friends can't deem you worthy enough to talk to other than when they need you, then cut them off!

- **Gossip and Drama**

If they will talk about someone to you, then nine times out of ten, they are talking about "you" to someone else. Gossip is a terrible thing. It's a stirring pot of drama and just creates bad energy. It hurts other people and it can make you look and feel bad about yourself in the long run.

One sure sign that your friends aren't really your friend, is when you find that you gossip more when around them. A real friend also wouldn't allow others to talk about you or anyone else in a negative way without you being there to defend yourself.

- **You Have To Mask Yourself While Around Them**

If you feel like you have to be someone other than your normal self around your friends then chances are they aren't your real friends. We all know this feeling. You go out with these people but you feel like you need to dress or talk differently in order to fit in.

- **Lies and Competition**

Fake friends are typically ashamed of who they are. They hate any and everything that has to do with honesty. It's lies that keep them feeling good about themselves. These types of friends also feel the need to compete with you on a regular basis.

Choose to share some good news with a friend shouldn't have to always propel him or her into a "me too" reaction. You should never be made to feel like you have to compete with your friends and vice versa. And no one should have to embellish on the truth to seek a more favorable opinion of themselves from others.

We are what we are. There is absolutely no point in making illusions and making up lies. Even if it did make other people like you more, they're liking a 'fake you,' which is more sad than having people dislike the real you.

- **Never Happy When You Achieve Something Great**

If your friend tends to have something negative or insulting to say to you every time you have some good news to share, have achieved something great, then this is not a real friend. Real friends are supportive and they are constantly sharing positive words of encouragement. They are also very selfless - they see potential in you, even when you can't see it in yourself. Pay attention to their reaction and body language, see if they seem genuine. 85% of communication is non-verbal so it should be easy to read right through them.

Friends are more than just good company. They are influential people in your life. They can either have a negative influence or a positive one. They are supportive and loving even when there is indifference and they play a big role in how you see and interact with the world.

Be the person you want to be and you'll attract individuals with the same beliefs, opinions, values, etc. The truth always comes out.

How to Become a Better Friend

- Listen when your friend is speaking. This is a very important part of becoming a better friend. You may believe you listen, but this is a skill and it is not always as easy as it seems. Listening involves focus. You must pay attention to what the other person is saying. If you can sum up the true gist of what your friend has been saying, then you are listening--otherwise, you may be hearing the words but you are not paying attention.
-
- Reach out to your friend. It's easy to get into a habit of letting the other person make the first move regarding activities. You'll enhance your friendship if you invite your friend to events rather than always waiting for your friend to invite you.
- Be genuine. Save your false front for acquaintances--let your friend see the real you. This doesn't mean you should arrive at his home with un-brushed teeth and wearing your house slippers. However, friends should be comfortable enough around each other to relax. If you're in a bad mood or good mood, say it. This implicitly gives your friend permission to be as genuine toward you.
- Learn how to apologize. No one is immune from mistakes or from accidentally hurting someone's feelings. A true apology is one that does not contain excuses for behavior. True apologies are a way of reaching out and asking for forgiveness. If you've wronged a friend, you'll be a true friend by offering a sincere apology.
- Avoid lying. Friends are honest with each other. If your friend asks you why you aren't coming to her party, for example, don't lie and say you have the flu when in truth you simply aren't feeling social. Your friend finding out you are lying can permanently mar the friendship because friendships need a strong level of trust to survive.
- Give emotional support. If your friend is going through a difficult time, be there extra for him. This doesn't mean you must drop everything and rush to rescue your friends. That is not always possible, nor is that always the best way of handling things. But one big part of friendship is being able to lean on friends when in need, and have friends lean on you when they are in need.