



trusted to be committed to someone such as your friend. When you make a serious promise, look at your friend in the eyes and speak slowly to show that you really mean it instead of just saying it because you think that you should. Do not break any such promise, as that will hurt your friend. It might even break up your friendship!

**Be dependable.** Being dependable is one of the most important aspects of being a good friend. Your friend will need you for support, especially in hard times. Nobody likes a fake, and nobody wants one for a close friend. It's hard to rely on a person who doesn't behave in a consistent and trustworthy way. We all know well-intentioned but flaky people who say, "Okay, I will..." but never follow through. If that's you, know that you're eroding your friends' trust; eventually they'll stop believing what you say. If you're not sure you can do something, don't agree to do it and flake out later. Instead, be honest about the fact that you're not sure if you can make it. Your friends should always feel like they can count on you, even when the going gets tough. If you're only there for the fun times, you'll be no more than a fair-weather friend.



**Apologize when you've made a mistake.** If you want your friends to trust you, then you can't act like you're flawless. If you know you've made a mistake, own up to it instead of being in denial. Though your friends won't be happy that you made a mistake, they'll be very pleased that you're mature and grounded enough to admit it instead of just pretending that nothing is wrong, or worse -- blaming it on someone else. When you say you're sorry, you should mean it. Let your friends hear the sincerity in your voice instead of thinking that you don't care how they feel.

**Be honest.** If you want to be a good friend and to have people trust you, then you have to be honest about your feelings, about your friends' actions, and about how you feel about your friendship. If you're honest about how you feel, that will open up direct lines of communication with your friends and will make them more likely to open up to you. If your friend hurt you, don't be afraid to talk about it; if something is upsetting you, don't feel too shy to open up to your friend about it. Blame does not work but expressing your feelings does. In a world where little white lies are a way of life it lightens one's spirit to just tell the truth and skip the deceit.

Being honest is different from being so blunt that you're hurting your friends' feelings. If you think your friend has a drinking problem, for example, then you owe it to your friend to start a conversation about it. But if you think your friend does not look her best in her new dress, you may want to keep quiet about it. Be real. Connect with people whom you value on a deep level if you want to have sustainable, long-term friendships. Invest in people you can be yourself around. If your behavior lacks sincerity, your friendship won't last.



**Don't use people.** Just sitting next to your friend can be healing for him or her. Many times we just need to be heard. If one of your friends suspects that you're just using them, then they'll drop you like a hot potato. Good friendships don't arise from hoping someone else's popularity or networks will rub off on you. If you're trying to be friends with a person just to be accepted into a certain clique, that's not friendship – it's opportunism – and eventually the shallow nature of your involvement will reveal itself. And if you have a reputation for using people, then new people won't be too excited to start a friendship with you. A friendship is about give and take. Sure, it may be really convenient that one of your friends gives you a ride to school every day, but make sure that you do something for that friend in return. Don't just take things for granted.

**Be loyal.** If your friend tells you something in confidence, keep it that way and don't talk about it with anyone else, just as you'd expect your friend to do for you. Don't discuss your friend behind his or her back, and don't spread rumors about the confidences they've imparted to you. Never say anything about your friend that you would not be prepared to repeat to their face. Be loyal to your true friends and be prepared to defend them if your new friends, or people you barely know, start gossiping about them. Part of being loyal understands the importance of a long-lasting and stable friendship. Don't be willing to throw all that away just to spend all your time hanging out with a new flame or neighbor or associate or a cool new network group.

If you have a reputation for being a blabbermouth or a gossip, then your friends will quickly find out and they'll be hesitant to reveal anything personal to you in the future -- or even to spend much time with you at all. Don't let others say bad things about your friend, either. Until you've had a chance to hear your friend's side of the story, treat comments that are not supportive as hearsay and rumors. If someone says something that shocks you and doesn't seem like a thing your friend would do or say, then respond with something like, "I know him/her, and that just doesn't sound right."





Let me talk to him/her; find out his/her perspective on this. Until then, I would appreciate it if you didn't spread that around.” Your obvious loyalty will be respected by the person hearing this.

**Be respectful.** Good friends show respect for each other by being openly and mutually supportive. If your friend has certain values and beliefs that don't align with your own, respect his or her choices and be open to hearing more about them. If you want your friend to trust you, then your friend should feel comfortable voicing opinions that you may not agree with, or discussing a new perspective with you. If your friend thinks that you'll shoot down any interesting or original idea that he or she may have, then your friendship won't be valued. Sometimes your friend will say things that you find boring, uncomfortable or annoying, but if you have respect for your friend, you'll give your friend the space to speak, and to do so without judgment. During times when you don't see eye to eye with your friend, disagree respectfully and be willing to see things differently. Then hug your friend when you both go on your way.

**Show up.** Good friends show up for each other. They don't say they're going to be there then wait to see if something better or more exciting comes up then change plans because of it. The world is full of self-serving people who say one thing then do another. Friends just do not allow this. If someone does that to you it's best to have a one on one chat about it without judgement, just feelings. A real friend will apologize and not do it again.



**Be a good listener.** People need to be heard now and then. Many times listening means staying quiet and letting the other person talk. Do not make their conversation about you. Bringing up your own experiences of similar situations does little to show support for your friend. All of a sudden the conversation has turned to your situation and not that of your friend. Nod your head, agree with your friend occasionally and say you understand.

In summary, friendship is about trust, dependability, listening without trying to fix it and holding someone in emotional pain or stress. Nothing takes the place of a good friend. Links to additional information on this topic can be found here: <http://tinybuddha.com/blog/25-ways-to-be-a-true-friend/> and also ... <http://www.lifeoptimizer.org/2008/08/27/become-true-friend/>

Until next time I'm Will Robertson sending you good wishes from all of us here at Performance Strategies, Inc. / Corporate Training Consulting Group.

For booking Mr. Robertson or any of our associates as a speaker, trainer, consultant or coach, call us at 1-800-242-1900 or E Mail us at [prospeaker@cox.net](mailto:prospeaker@cox.net) .

