

Friendship: A Single Soul Dwelling in Two Bodies

Friendship is considered one of the central human experiences and for many people it may be as important as love. It is an essential component of many people's daily lives. It is rather difficult to describe the main features of friendship in one phrase. Friendship means devotion, faith, complete trust and unselfishness. A friend is a person who understands and supports you in times of need or crisis, shows kindness and sympathy, has similar tastes, interests and life philosophies. Your friend is your helper, adviser and supporter. You can always trust him and share your hardships with him. Friends are absolutely disinterested and they help you without being asked to and without the expectation that you will have to repay them. A true friend can always acknowledge his fault if he is wrong and apologize. Besides, a true friend can forgive you if you have hurt his feelings or if you have given him a lot of trouble.

In Greek and Roman times, friendship was thought of as being an essential constituent of both a good society and a good life. It was supposed to nurture wisdom and happiness. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher and scientist, believed that friendship could fall into three categories: it could be based on utility, pleasure or goodness. In its latter state, Aristotle described it as being 'a single soul dwelling in two bodies'. During the time of the Roman Empire, Cicero had his own beliefs on friendship. He thought that in order to have a true friendship with someone there must be all honesty and truth. If there isn't, then this isn't a true friendship. There are different types of friendship. For example not every friend is called your best or close friend. Your best friend is a person with whom you share strong interpersonal ties. Your soulmate is someone who is considered the ultimate, true, and eternal half of your soul. An acquaintance is a person with whom you don't share emotional ties, for example your coworker. A person with whom you share a 'postal' relationship and communicate through letters is your pen pal. Nowadays it is very popular to make friends online. Friendship that takes place over the Internet is called Internet friendship.

Most people have friends, regardless of gender, age, education, financial position and residency. But they tend to form friendships with representatives of their own social circle and with people of their own age. There is often a gap between people with different educational level, life experience and financial standing. In other words most people understand friendship as a union of the equal. However some of us have friends who are much younger or older than we are, who are poorer or wealthier and whose level of education is much higher or lower than ours. Some reserved and shy people find making friends rather difficult. Besides, friendship means rendering a service to your friend from time to time, telling the truth and exhibiting loyalty. It takes time and effort, but true friendship is worth of it. It is stressful to live in the world of strangers, that's why people need friends. They give us a sense of being protected, emotional comfort and moral support. Having no friends can be emotionally damaging in some cases. As the proverb says, 'A true friend is the best possession'.