

The Ring of Friendship



Friendship bracelets have gone through different levels of popularity since the 1960s when the hippie movement used them to denote like-minded souls. But decorative knot-work was used centuries before. China boasts some of the oldest examples of this dating back to approximately 500 BC. The knot tying patterns of macramé came

from 13th century Arabian weavers. North, South, and Central Ameri-Indians developed decorative knot-work pieces alongside their beading and weaving techniques.

These bracelets have always been used to signify friendship between two or more people. Friendship takes a lot more than giving each other a colorful bracelet. What qualities do you personally draw from to be a good friend? Think, what qualities do you look for in a good friend? They are basically the same.

It takes time to form a good friendship; even longer to form a lasting friendship; and it takes conscious care and thought. Initially you may feel a “like” of someone when you meet, leading you to want to know more about them. You look for some common ground: common interests, hobbies, and activities. As we grow older we meet potential friends through the workplace; through the common interests of our children; or through the web connections that have traversed time and space. This lays a friendship foundation, but there are still many floors to be built.

After initial meetings you are faced with vulnerability moments, needing to open yourself up and show the real you. After all, if you aren’t honest in presenting yourself then they are friends with the “pretend you”, so they can’t really qualify as *your* friend. Once you are friends, show interest in what your friends do and if something doesn’t interest you be honest about that also. (Remember, you are looking for the same in return.)

Become a loyal friend. Lend support when needed in the appropriate measure and manner. Be that trusted friend and keep their secrets and personal information to yourself. Don't think of spreading gossip and don't tear down a friend but build them up when you can. And for goodness sake, have fun together! True you can share the trials and tribulations but sharing the good times and achievements add good balance to the friendship. Nobody likes a constant whining friend for long.

Appreciate the differences between you. No two people are exactly alike. Those differences can create stimulating conversations, exposure to new things, present new ideas, and the opportunity to try new activities. Stay open, give it a try, and enrich your life. You may not like the new experiences but be honest with your friend and admit it. Your friend will understand, after all, that friend has those same great qualities. That's why your friends!

Let me take a moment to talk about the high maintenance friend. We have all had at least one and you are familiar with the signs. The friend that is energy draining, whining, includes you in their tirades, and wants you to condone their self-victimization. A high maintenance friend puts your boundaries to the test. Accept who they are because they probably won't change but make sure you let them know when you cannot devote time to them when they are out of control. Honesty holds true here as well. Tell them when they are usurping your time, draining your energy, and don't allow them to involve you in their complaining. If they don't understand they will probably scratch you off their friend list and move on to someone else. If they don't and things persist or escalate you are justified in ending the friendship.

Friendships play an important part in all of our lives. Create some lasting memories throughout the years and treasure each and every one!

With Gratitude,

Kai