

10 Ways to Make New Friends

Most of us know more than 100 people (how about all of our Facebook and LinkedIn friends), but how many of those people would you call your good friends?

So, apart from being friendly (which works really well), how do we as adults make new friends? Asking 'Will you be my friend?' just doesn't work like it used to when we were kids does it?

Here are 10 other ways you can try to make new friends:

1. **Reach out to people:** I know this might feel strange or uncomfortable at first if you've been raised to 'not talk to strangers' (unlike me who had a mother who could strike up and carry a conversation with anyone, even if they couldn't speak English!). Reaching out to people you'd like to be friends with and breaking out of your comfort zone to do it is worth the effort. Inviting them out to an event is a great way to get to know someone better. If that seems too large a step, then start by striking up a conversation with them and follow up with them later.
2. **Follow up:** OK, so you met someone whom you like and would like to get to know better. Now what? Follow up on your initial meeting by e-mailing them, invite them to be a friend on Facebook or LinkedIn, or call them and, this time, invite them to do something with you. Offer more than one alternative too, like drinks, an event or coffee.
3. **Treat people as if they already are your friends:** Enjoy speaking or interacting with people, be interested in them and really listen to what they're saying. Don't rush your interactions. Let people know you have time for them. When you do, you'll send out vibes that make you really likeable to others. Note to business owners: this works equally well with potential clients too - treat them as if they are already your clients and see what happens.
4. **Say 'hello' to people instead of waiting for them to say 'hello' to you:** Acknowledge people. You might not become best friends, but it's easier to strike up a conversation later if you have established that familiarity and shown that you're friendly and open to establishing a friendship.
5. **Steer clear of gossips:** There's an old Turkish saying '*If someone gossips to you, they'll gossip about you!*' So, be wary of befriending a gossip if you discover this about someone you meet - they might not make an ideal friend - and be especially careful of what you share with them.

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6. **Be yourself:** When we are ourselves (and stop behaving in a way we think is 'right') we let our unique light shine into other people's lives, which in turn makes them feel comfortable being themselves with us. I don't think anyone wants to be friends with a fake!
7. **Befriend your friend's friends:** A quick way to make new friends is to make friends with your friend's friends. You can easily get to know these people at your friend's gatherings or parties or, if you know who it is you'd like to get to know, invite your friend to something, or host your own party or gathering, and ask your friend to invite their friend along. If you're actively wanting to make friends, be willing to go to parties and events even if you don't know who'll be there. It's an opportunity to meet someone new.
8. **Do a course for fun or join a sports team:** There are many adult learning opportunities available. Try a cooking, jewellery making or yoga class for example, or join a sports team - old scholars, a local competition, or create a social team combining your work colleagues, your friends and friends of your work colleagues.
9. **Join alumni, old scholars or other networking groups:** Again, there are numerous groups and associations hosting events throughout the year you can join. I belong to two groups - The Adelaide Network (since 2000) and SASSI and have met some great friends through both of these.
10. **Travel alone:** Explore the world and connect with like-minded people. I took a 10-day Insight tour of Europe in my 20s travelling alone, and within an hour, I'd made 5 friends who were great to travel with. And, interestingly, two of them are now married to each other.

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