

## **12 Tips for Making and Keeping Friends**

- Reach out – Don't always wait for someone else to make the first move. A simple "Hi" and a smile go a long way. It may sound corny, but you'll be amazed at the response you'll receive when you extend a friendly greeting.
- Get involved – Join clubs that interest you. Take special classes inside and outside of school. Seek out neighborhood and community organizations and other opportunities to give service to others.
- Let people know that you're interested in them. Don't just talk about yourself all the time. Ask friends questions about their lives and their interests. Make this a habit and you'll have mastered the art of conversation. It's amazing how many people haven't yet grasped this basic social skill.
- Be a good listener – This means looking at people while they are talking to you and genuinely pay attention to what they're saying.
- Risk telling people about yourself. When it feels right, let your interests and talents be known. For example, if you love Science Fiction and you'd like to know others who feel the same way, spread the word. Maybe initiate a club on campus and see who else is interested.
- Be honest – Tell the truth about yourself and when asked for your opinion, be sincere. Friends appreciate honest in each other. Also remember, that the truth shouldn't hurt a friend. If you don't like the new clothing or haircut on a friend, make it a point to keep the negative comment to yourself.
- Don't just use your friends as a sounding board for all your problems and complaints. That can be overwhelming to others.
- Do your share of the work – Any relationship takes effort. Don't always depend on your friends to make the plans and carry the weight for social gatherings.
- Be accepting – Not all your friends have to think and act like you do. That would make for a boring world if they did!
- Learn to recognize your true friends and those you can do without – Some gifted students get so lonely that they put up with anyone – including others who aren't really friends at all.