

Counselor's Corner

Would You Like to Have More Friends?

When I was little, my friends and I used to carry around autograph books. I never got signatures from famous athletes, musicians, or actors, and that was not the purpose of this book. We collected signatures, words of wisdom, and kind thoughts from relatives, classmates, neighbors, teachers, and almost anyone in our sight. Although I neither remember what happened to this book nor do I recall most of its contents, one quote has stayed with me. A recreation director had written, "Recipe for friendship: be one." It didn't seem very clear at the time, but the years have shed great light on it.

As humans, we have a tendency to be impressed with material things, looks, talent, and money. Although these things can't hurt, the key to acquiring friends does not depend on the external. In fact, some people who lack all of the above are people magnets. So, how do we (with or without impressive attributes and acquisitions) get to be people others want to make part of their lives?

It seems that most important is to forget the desired outcome. If we don't, we will be trying too hard, and we may appear needy. We also must pay less attention to ourselves! Instead, make family, friends, and acquaintances the focus. Listen and learn **their** needs. Stop all the talk about self, and place ourselves in the shoes of others. Ask others how we might be of service. We admire people who do this, so what is stopping us from modeling what we see and like in others?

Forbes magazine recently published an article called "11 Secrets of Irresistible People." Guess what? The author believes that others are attracted to us when they see that we are confident, genuine, **put others first**, and live a life of integrity. He says nothing about putting on makeup, getting a different hair style, losing weight, purchasing expensive clothing and accessories, buying a status home, or driving hot cars to "win friends and influence people".

Instead, the author promoted something called the "Platinum Rule." In my research, I learned that this term was coined by Dr. Tony Alessandra. The emphasis again is on "other centeredness." Dr. Alessandra feels the Golden Rule should be replaced, because it is built on the assumption that everyone has the same needs. After all, it says that we should treat others as **we** want to be treated. In contrast, the "Platinum Rule" says to treat others as **they** want to be treated.

Whether we are students or adults, the rewards will be great when we look outside of our limited views, try to understand our neighbors, and strength from within. Like a boomerang, our interest and care in and for others will come back to us with friendships we never imagined.

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