

Text with commentary.

**[Befriending and being befriended]**

Most people seem,

owing to ambition, *[ambition: they want honor]*  
to wish to be befriended rather than to befriend; *[note the important role of wishing here]*  
which is why most men love flattery;  
for the flatterer is a friend in an inferior position, or pretends to be such and to befriend more than he  
is befriended;  
and being befriended is akin to being **honored**, and this is what most people aim at.

**[Honor and the logic of honor; Aristotle will set up honor and then distinguish friendship from it]**

But it seems to be not for its own sake that people choose honor, but incidentally.

1. For most people enjoy being honored by those in positions of authority because of their hopes  
(for they think that if they want anything they will get it from them; and therefore they delight in  
honor as a token of favor to come)
2. while those who desire honor from good men and from men who know are aiming at confirming their  
own opinion of themselves; they delight in honor, therefore, because they believe in their own goodness  
on the strength of the judgment of those who speak about them.  
*[honor points to some other good beyond itself; it is not and cannot be ultimate; it either promises a  
future good—for those who are utilitarian—or it confirms the virtue that renders the honor  
deserved]*

**[Back to friendship, love; now we make the distinction between honor and friendship]**

In being befriended, on the other hand, people delight for its own sake; *[it's not ordered toward anything else]*  
whence it would seem to be better than being honored,  
and friendship to be desirable in itself. *[you want it for itself and not for anything else]*

**[Now a distinction within friendship; befriending as higher than being befriended]**

But it seems to lie in befriending rather than in being befriended,  
as is indicated by the delight mothers take in loving [befriending];  
for some mothers hand over their children to be brought up, and so long as they know their fate they love  
them and do not seek to be loved in return (if they cannot have both),  
but seem to be satisfied if they see them prospering;  
and they themselves love their children even if these owing to their ignorance give them nothing of a  
mother's due.

**[Conclusion]**

Now since friendship depends more on befriending, *[friendship comes from befriending]*  
and it is those who love their friends that are praised, *[praise/blame as the sign of virtue]*  
befriending seems to be the characteristic **virtue** (*aretē*) of friends, *[the proper excellence]*  
so that it is only those in whom this is found in due measure that are lasting friends,  
and only their friendship that endures.

*[note the elegant comparison [distinction] between friendship and honor, two of the highest goods in the active  
life; honor is passive, received; there is a form of friendship that is passive and received, but the highest  
friendship is the active exercise of it; this activity is the special virtue (excellence) of a good agent]*