

RELATIONSHIPS/ FRIENDSHIP/ MAKING FRIENDS

How To Tell If Someone Wants To Be Your Friend

March 5, 2021 [David A. Morin](#) Last updated July 22, 2021Scientifically reviewed by [Viktor Sander B.Sc., B.A.](#)

"I find it really difficult to know whether someone wants to be my friend. I don't want to assume they like me if they're only being polite. What are the signs that someone is truly interested in be"

If you're unsure whether someone wants to be your friend, you'll need to pay close attention to their behavior towards you. In this guide, you'll learn how to tell when you've made a new friend, as well as the differences between acquaintances.

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Signs someone wants to be your friend

1. They are eager to hang out

To become friends with someone, you need to spend time together. Research shows that it takes around 50 hangouts to become a friend.^[1] If you are both enthusiastic about making plans, this shows you are both invested in your friendship.

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If you meet someone at a group event and you hang out together one-on-one, it usually means they want to know you away from everyone else. For example, if you met in a class or at work, inviting you out for lunch means they probably feel the two of you could be friends.

2. They are opening up to you

All friendships start with small talk in the beginning, but as the friendship grows, the conversations usually get deeper. For example, you might have talked about your work or studies when you first met but then start opening up about political views after hanging out a few times.

3. You have discovered things in common

Not everyone who has things in common automatically becomes friends, but commonalities are a good starting point for a friendship. It often feels easier to bond with someone when they are like you in some way. If you are both excited about something, someone who shares your interests, you're on your way to becoming friends.

4. They are introducing you to new people

If someone invites you to meet their partner, their other friends, or their family members, they probably want you to be a permanent member of their social circle. If you are shy or socially anxious, meeting your friend's new friends can be daunting. But try to make yourself go along. You might have fun, and it'll be a great chance to practice your social skills.

This also works the other way around: if you think it would be fun to invite someone to hang out with other people, they are likely you are starting to think of them as a friend.

5. You have inside jokes

Inside jokes are a sign of intimacy because they are based on shared experiences and memories that no one else knows. Banter and good-natured teasing are also signs that the two of you are developing a friendly bond.

6. They share things when you're apart

For example, let's say you and your new friend have discovered a shared love of horror movies. When they find a documentary about old Dracula films, they send you a link. This kind of sharing shows that your new friend has paid attention to your conversations and that they enjoy bonding with you over your shared interests.

7. You start planning things months in advance

When someone decides you are their friend, they might make comments about the things you could do together in the future. This suggests they hope your friendship will continue.

For example:

[In the spring]: "Hey, you like camping, right? We should take a trip this summer!"

[In the summer]: "I'm already excited for my friend's Halloween party this year. You should come with me."

[Two months before a film is released]: "We're going to have to see that movie as soon as it comes out. It'll be great!"

When you feel comfortable with someone, you'll probably start making similar comments and suggestions to

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8. You give each other advice

If someone spends a lot of time complaining and talking about their problems without showing any interest in your life, they are probably just using you as a personal therapist. But if they occasionally ask you for your opinion about a specific problem and seem grateful for your advice, this suggests they are starting to trust you as a friend.

Likewise, if you feel able to trust someone with your personal problems, you are probably beginning to see them as a friend.

9. They offer you help and support

Friends try to make each other's lives easier by offering practical help and emotional support. If someone is going through a difficult time and offers you a way to help you, and you're happy to lend a hand in return, there's a good chance that you are becoming friends.

How to tell if someone is your friend

1. They respect you

Real friends do not put you down, lie to you, rudely dismiss your opinions, or make you the butt of unkind jokes. They are able to trust that your friend will always treat you with respect, even if you don't always agree. You should be able to trust them, knowing that they won't gossip about you.

2. You both put effort into seeing each other

If they're too busy to meet in person, a true friend will be happy to at least make time for a quick phone call or text. They like your company and seem genuinely glad to see you.

3. They are happy when you succeed

Real friends are genuinely pleased and excited when you achieve something great or have some good luck. They cheer for you. If they feel jealous, they take responsibility for their feelings instead of showing it.

4. You feel uplifted after spending time with them

Good friends make you feel better about yourself and life in general. You can't expect your friends to be unhappy all the time. As a rule, friendships should bring you joy.

5. You feel you can be authentic around them

When you're hanging out with a real friend, there's no need to put on a mask. You can relax and let your personality shine through. You don't need to worry about impressing a friend because you already know they accept you for who you are.

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6. They are genuinely interested in your life

A friend will ask about the things that matter to you, and they'll listen carefully to your answers without interrupting. If you don't share your interests, they'll be willing to talk about your hobbies if it makes you happy.

A good friend will ask follow-up questions that relate to previous conversations. For example, if you told them that you're looking for a new job, they might ask, "So, how's the job search going?"

7. You can resolve your differences

Occasional misunderstandings and arguments are a normal part of friendship. What really matters is how you handle disagreements. Ideally, you should both focus on trying to understand each other's point of view rather than "win."

8. They don't keep score

Healthy friendships are based on give and take, but true friends don't get hung up over whether the relationship is fair. They understand that it's normal for one person to need a little extra help occasionally, and that friendships benefit both people over time.

If you're still not sure whether someone is your friend, this list of [28 signs of a true friend](#) might help.

Signs someone doesn't want to be your friend

1. They are evasive when you invite them out

If you try to agree on a time or place, they might give you vague answers like, "I'll get back to you" or "Yeah, sometime. I'll let you know when I'm free." Or they might claim to be busy, but you later discover that they didn't have any plans or spent the time hanging out with other people.

Article continues below.

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2. They never or rarely reach out first

If someone is slow to respond to your messages or return your calls, it's possible they could lead a very hectic life. As a general rule, when someone wants to be your friend, they will make an effort to stay in touch.

3. They don't want to learn about you or your life

If someone quickly changes the topic of conversation when you're sharing something about yourself, they probably don't want to be your friend. Friends take an active interest in each other. Bear in mind that some people will happily offload their problems on you. Take this quiz to see how you can make new friends. [Start quiz](#) for more support.

4. They redirect your attention onto other people

Not many people are rude enough to say, "I don't want to be your friend. You should find someone else to hang out with." But some people will gently push you towards someone else and hope that you'll take the hint.

For example, they might say something like, "Thank you for inviting me, but I'm not really into [activity]. Have you ever tried [something else]? That's more their kind of thing."

5. Their body language says, "I'm not interested"

A person's body language can give you clues about how they feel. Here are a few signs that suggest they don't want to spend time with you:

- Pointing their feet away from you
- Folding their arms across their body
- Leaning away from you
- Fake smiles; if their eyes don't crinkle at the corners when they smile and the corners of their mouth don't turn up, their smile probably isn't sincere^[2]
- Playing with their phone instead of giving you their full attention

However, you need to take their body language in context. For example, if someone folds their arms, they might just be cold. Look for patterns. If they always or almost always seem disinterested or uneasy, when you talk to them they want to be your friend.

How to tell if someone is a friend or acquaintance

If you aren't sure which category someone falls into, ask yourself these questions:

Where do we see each other?

Acquaintances only interact because they happen to be in the same place at the same time. For example, let's say you and a friend take the same train every morning to work. If you fell into the habit of making small talk with a couple of other regulars on the train, they would fall into the acquaintance category.

Friends go out of their way to meet up because they enjoy each other's company. If you ask an acquaintance to meet up somewhere at a specific time and place, you are taking the first step from "acquaintance" to "friend."

What do we talk about?

Acquaintances usually stick to surface-level talk. They might swap names and a few general details, such as where they work. Friends, on the other hand, tend to have deep discussions.

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Friends know a lot more about each other. A friend will know where you live, where you work or study, what your free time, major problems you're facing in your life, your relationship status, other important background your age and where you grew up.

It is possible to have a very personal conversation with someone you barely know, but this doesn't mean you are friends. For example, two strangers may meet in a bar and tell each other about their problems after a few drinks. Disclosure is only one part of friendship. Real friends are consistently helpful, trustworthy, and reliable.

Do we help each other out?

Acquaintances usually offer sympathy if they hear you are having a tough time, but they don't go out of their way to help you.

Friends offer practical or emotional support in times of need. You feel comfortable calling or texting them when you have a problem and are happy for them to do the same in return.

This guide to [the differences between acquaintances and friends](#) goes into more detail. It also gives you practical tips on how to turn an acquaintance into a friend.

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David Morin is the founder of SocialPro. He's been writing about social skills since 2012. [Follow on Twitter](#) or [read more](#)

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May 9, 2021 at 1:49 am

Thanks! It helps to define friends and acquaintances, to know what can be expected of me and of them

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Alex

May 7, 2021 at 10:49 pm

Helpful tips and analysis, good work!

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Charity

May 7, 2021 at 8:00 pm

This was really helpful. I really enjoyed the examples of how to tell if someone is your friend or doesn't wa are things I think should be hardwired into my brain by now (I'm 40!!), but they're not and I still struggle, b improve and your articles are helping me. Thank you!!!

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Irene Baidinger

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Thank you David!

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