

And a youth said,  
"speak to us on  
friendship. your friend  
is your needs  
answered" ...

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



Just what are our needs? Money? Love? Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs that purports that any human has the potential to grow into a healthy, self-actualized individual if basic, instinctual needs are met in a certain order.

When the youth asks about Friendship in Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, the answer is, "Your friend is your needs answered." (Gibran, "The Prophet: On Friendship").

Thus, a good friend will fulfill the hierarchy of needs to enable an individual to meet his/her full potential as a human being. Maslow's five basic needs are physiological needs, safety needs, needs of belongingness, needs for esteem, and needs for self-actualization (Simons, Irwin, and Drinnien).

As Gibran stated, your friend is your needs answered. If the first need is physiological, Gibran states that as his first illustration. "He is your field which you sow... and he is your board and your fireside, For you come to him with your hunger (Gibran, "The Prophet: On Friendship").

First and foremost, a friend meets your most basic needs for food and shelter. Even Simon and Garfunkel said, "When you're down and out/ When you're on the street ... I will comfort you" (Simon, "Bridge"). Throughout time, people in all societies have come together in friendship to ensure a place in which to live and a way to ensure food stores.

There were hunters and gatherers, farmers, industrialist, businesspeople. It is the collegiality, comradeship, companionship that enables us to propagate our survival. But to take it a step further, the physiological needs include all

of the vitamins, minerals and chemicals to keep our bodies functioning properly. We can be our own friend if we listen to our bodies and fulfill those needs.

The next requirement Maslow lists is safety needs. This need will only be felt once the former needs for food and shelter are met. Again, throughout the millennia, humans have come together to protect each other against some common enemy.

The formation of ordered societies shows the innate human desire for stability and structure; a home in a safe neighborhood, a good job, a comfortable pension. We breed our children by providing boundaries and limits to ward off insecurity and fear. It is our way of meeting this need.

Once a person is fed and safe, he/she needs to feel a part of something bigger, something universal. Friends historically have been able to provide this sense of belonging.

As humans develop and explore their world, they acquire friends. Children make friends in school. Teens rely on their friends to learn who they are to become. Adults look for belonging in a career, a relationship, a family and friends.

After all, friends do "go together like rama lama lama de dingity dinga dong. That's the way it should be" according to Maslow (Jacobs and Warren, "Together").

As it would follow, once the need for belonging is met, the need for esteem arises. Not only does one need to feel a part of something substantial, but

also feel they are looked on or regarded as important and vital to that substance.

This is what Maslow calls the lower version of esteem (Boeree, "Personality"). People look outside of themselves for acceptance, recognition, appreciation, even fame. Part of Maslow's hierarchy also includes what he calls the higher version of the esteem issue; self-esteem (Boeree, "Personality").

This version includes the need for self-respect, self-confidence, achievement and independence. Maslow considers this the higher form because while it is more difficult to achieve, once you have self-respect, it is much harder to lose than the respect of others (Boeree, "Personality").

It is important to note here that once all of the previous needs are met, we no longer feel a need for them. We are satiated. A good, true friend has stood by us in fulfilling and continuing to fulfill these needs. It is that same good, true friend that will accompany us on the last journey to self-actualization.

The last craving we will feel, once we arrive at that level, will continue to be felt. It is our desire to "be all that we can be." The more we feed this hunger, the stronger it becomes. However we cannot focus on living up to our potential if we are hungry, cold, scared, alone. The true friend is one who helps us maintain the lower needs so we can pursue the higher. In a perfect world, we would do the same for our friend.

Friendship then is a journey. It is the meeting of all needs along the way to being all that a person can be. Friendship is there for the long haul; "for self is a sea boundless and measureless" as The Prophet says. "Say not, 'I have found the truth,' but rather, 'I have found a truth.'" (Gibran, "The Prophet: On Friendship") because the journey you will take with your friend is endless.

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