

# Relationship between self-love and friendship

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



According to Aristotle in "The Nicomachean Ethics" he talks about the relationship between self-love and friendship. Aristotle states that there are three types of friendship: utilizing friendship, pleasurable friendship and virtuous friendship. In order to have a virtuous friendship you must have a virtuous self-love. In order to have a virtuous self-love you must do virtuous acts. "Perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue." (Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, p. 145) Human beings want to have friendships with people who are alike and according to Aristotle the good kind of friendship is the virtuous kind. Aristotle enforces the idea that there are three types of friendships two of which are selfish friendships: utilizing and pleasurable friendships. "Therefore those who love because of utility love because of what is good for themselves, and those who love because of pleasure do so because of what is pleasant to themselves." (Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, p. 144) When a person is in a relationship with another for utility or pleasure, this is not highly admired by other people. Friendships like these will most likely end once the person who's using the other begins to lose interest or lose the qualities they were looking for. Pleasurable friendship tends to be the most temporary. Feelings change often and once the feeling of pleasure leaves so will the wanting of that relationship. Aristotle believes this tends to happen mostly amongst young adults due to the fact that their young nature permits them to act rationally on their emotions. Utility friendships are based on how one party benefits from the other. Once the use of that person runs out than the person who was utilizing them will end the relationship. "Thus when the reason for the friendship is done away, the friendship is dissolved, inasmuch

as it existed only for the ends in questions. " (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 144) The friendship that Aristotle believes to be the greatest kind of friendship is a virtuous friendship. If a virtuous person befriends someone who is virtuous then they will have a long lasting friendship. They are enjoying each other's company not just for the benefit of themselves but also for the benefits for each other. " For they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally; therefore friendships lasts as long as they are good. " (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 145) If you are in a virtuous friendship than both friends will have a pleasurable time. If a man were to love himself, he will have the characteristics of a virtuous person. This would be called self-love. Some of which Aristotle lists such as " one who wishes his friend to exist and live for his sake" and " one who grieves and rejoices with his friend. " (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 168) Basically a relationship a child has with his or her mother is the characteristics of a virtuous person. In order to have a good friendship with someone you must engage in virtuous acts. More characteristics of a virtuous man include, harmonious opinions and he wishes himself to live and be preserved. " Existence is good to the virtuous man, and each man wishes himself what is good. " (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 168) A man who has bad characteristics such as regret and does not know how to love will most likely have a utility or pleasurable relationship that is one sided. " If a man cannot at the same time be pained and pleased, and he could have wished that these things had not been pleasant to him; for bad men are full of regrets. " (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 170) People should attempt to stray away from these bad characteristics. Aristotle brings up a question " whether

a man should love himself most, or someone else. " (Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, p. 173) If a man were to love himself it would appear as a selfish type of love but the true meaning of self-love is to love one's best friend and one's best friend is yourself. A man's best friend would will his friend to do well for his own sake. You yourself would try to will good onto yourself making you your own best friend. Aristotle concludes that when a good man is a lover of himself, he and those around him will profit from his noble acts. The wicked man who has yet to love himself he will hurt both himself and his neighbors. A wicked man has inner conflicts with " what he ought to do and what he is supposed to do. " (Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, p. 175)