

# Friendship: theories and definitions

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A friendship is thought to represent the mutual bond between two individuals or a group of people who are friends. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a friend means, “one attached to another by affection or esteem” (Merriam-Webster). Being a friend means that you are connected to that individual or group of people by a common interest or mutual hobby. A friendship is made up of many different characteristics. However, there are three main ones that hold these bonds together. The three main characteristics that make up a friendship are being trustworthy, dependable, and balance. We can see many examples of what it means to be a friend in Stephen King’s book, *IT*, with the kid characters. We also see many examples of this in the Netflix Series, *Stranger Things* with the Loser Club kids. Throughout the book and Netflix series, we see the parts that make up a friendship grow and flower. Unfortunately, we also see those parts of the friendship break down and fall apart.

The characteristic of being a trustworthy individual is a big part of being in a friendship. An individual that is showing that they are trustworthy is someone who can be trusted with anything. Like important information or keeping secrets. We can see this when Mike tells Dustin and Lucas not to tell anyone that they found Eleven or that she was hiding out in his basement. He tells them not to tell anyone or their parents and to keep her a secret until he can figure out what to do (“Chapter Two: The Weirdo on Maple Street”). This shows that Mike was trusting his friends. He was telling them important information that needed to be kept just between them. If that information got out to Mike’s parents or anyone in the community, Eleven would not only be in danger of other citizens coming to get her but the bad

guys from the testing laboratory also. According to Secret to Friendship: Children Make Inferences About Friendship Based on Secret Sharing, “Therefore, tracking which people know each other’s secrets can be used as a cue of social relationships: If one person tells another person a secret, those people are likely friends” (Lieberman). People tell each other their secrets because they have trust in them and see them as their friends. They would not tell them their secrets if they did not believe that they could keep it and could not trust them with that information. Along with people having trust in somebody, they also have to think of that individual as dependable.

The second big character that makes up friendship is being dependable. This word has many meanings and ways that it could be looked at. One way that it could be looked at is if a person is reliable to someone else, most likely their friend. For example, they could keep information that the other individual told them and did not want anyone else to know. They could also come to the rescue or aid to someone when they really need it. We can see all the different examples of individuals being dependable when Mike called all of his friends when he was little and told them that the monster was back. When he called each of his friends, he told them that it was an emergency and that they needed to get back to Derry because he personally needed their help. He was counting on them to be dependable in his time of need, so they could help him save the citizens of the town from a clown that fed on children’s fears (King 40-165). Another way that an individual can be dependable is if someone can count on them not only in their time of need in that present time period but in the future as well. When someone knows that they can depend on you right now and then, they assume that they have the

same amount of dependability in the future that they did in the past. In *Commitment and Trust in Young Adult Friendships*, people who have what is called interpersonal trust can be defined as, “ the expectation that a partner can be relied upon to be responsive to one’s needs, both in the present and in the future (Wieselquist). The author is explaining how being dependable intertwines with being trustworthy. With having trust in someone, comes being able to trust them to be dependable. Not only does having trust and being dependable go hand in hand, but they both also overlap with having a balanced friendship.

Friendships over time can become one-sided and unbalanced. This can become a problem. However, this can be resolved by just making a few small adjustments. According to *Friendships in Middle School: Influences on Motivation and School Adjustment*, “ It is likely that significant associations between having friends and other positive aspects of adjustment partly reflect the fact that adolescents who demonstrate competence in one domain of functioning (i. e., making friends) often do so in other domains” (Wentzel et al., 2004). These authors are suggesting that if you make these little adjustments to a friendship, then it will help it to function better and these tactics could be used for other situations. One little adjustment that could be made is to act as a middle man and make compromises. For example, if one person wanted to make beaded bracelets and the other person wanted to make braided string bracelets, then they would find a way to make both happen. To resolve this problem, both individuals could make this work and make a compromise by making beaded string bracelets. This solution would please both sides and make each person happy. Another little

adjustment that could be made is to give each other space. If two individuals were to get into a fight and neither of them could not admit who was wrong or agree on a solution, they could give each other some space and time to calm down. During this time when they are separated, this will give each person a chance to cool down and reflect on what happened. They could come up with an alternate solution that was not talked about before that might be a better option for both of them. We can see this happen when Ben was thinking about what happened to the silver dollar. When he is thinking about this, he internally thinks, "...what did she do? And how was it able to work? She backed it off, and we all helped her..." (King 543). During this situation, Beverly realizes that she need help. She makes the little adjustment and backed off, thought of other resolutions, and had her friends help her. This shows that if people stop and think about other options, they can get to a resolution faster and one that is more prevalent in the situation that they are in.

When people think about the definition of what a friend is and means, there is a range of answers and opinions that will be suggested. Most people associate a friend with the idea of having a friendship and being connected with something they have in common. Also when someone thinks about the definition of what a friend is and what a friendship all entails, there will be a lot of characteristics that could and will end up being thrown out. Out of all of these characteristics, the majority of them will be common. To make up a friendship, the three most important and thought of characteristics are being trusted by someone, being thought of as dependable, and having a good sense of balance. These three characteristics are what hold these bonds

within a friendship together. Many examples of these three characteristics and how they hold the bonds of friendship together can be seen in the Netflix series, *Stranger Things*, and in Stephen King's book, *IT*. Within the book and TV series, we can see the great rise and the hard fall of these friendships. All in all, if people work on changing their ways of going about things and seeing the situations in a different eye, their friendships will excel. The bonds between them will grow and prosper. The bonds will show people what it really looks like to represent the true meaning and definition of friendship between two or more people.