

Why Don't I Have Any Friends?

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This book is dedicated to the women of my [Christian Women With Depression Facebook Group](#) who asked me this question, and to the women who have shared their friendships with me over the years. Thank you to those who proofed and provided feedback as well. Special thanks to my 2017 Celebrate Recovery Step Study ladies, who helped me really think this through, added their insights, and gave me a great weekend away which I will cherish forever - Susan, Meredith and Mandy.

Introduction

This book is being written as a fulfillment to a promise I made to the 2300 women currently in my Christian Women with Depression Facebook group. The number one thing you wanted to know was why you can't make friends. You are not alone. If you Google "Why don't I have any friends?" there are over 98 million results. There are a lot of other people who feel like you do. I am going to do my best to explain to you why you feel that way and how to change that.

I'm going to be very honest with you, but I hope that it will help you to realistically see what may be getting in the way of you building new friendships or enjoying the friendships you currently have. I, like Jesus, want you to have life and have it more abundantly. My prayer for you is to have multiple enjoyable relationships that will enhance your life in different areas and help you enjoy life more.

But you will have to accept the limitations of friendships and be willing to change your definition of them. You will also, most likely, need to make adjustments to yourself to be able to be that kind of friend that other people will

want to spend time with. I do not mean becoming someone else other than who you are. Despite how you feel, there is nothing wrong with who God made you to be. However, your expectations of other people may be unrealistic, and you may not remember what draws one friend to another.

My Best Friend

When I was in high school, I had a best friend from elementary school. I went on family vacations with her, ran away from home to her house, and we loved watching the same movies and reading the same books. She had another more vivacious and adventurous friend whose company she also really enjoyed.

But there came a day when she decided that she wanted to start smoking marijuana with her other friend. She invited me to come do it with them. I,

however, had no desire to do drugs or be around anyone who did them. I told her that she would have to choose between the drugs or me. She chose the drugs and her other friend.

I was very sad, but I was not about to change my decision because it was very important to me not to be around drugs. And obviously, my friendship was not as important to her as getting high. What was once an extremely close friendship changed into a non existent one. Her tastes changed and caused a dissolution of the friendship. What now made her happy did not make me

happy. We no longer had those things in common.

I developed other friendships, not quite so all encompassing as the original friendship. I would talk with one friend about one type of thing and joke with another friend about other things.

Friendship was spread out among more people and was localized to the things we had in common. We all had multiple friends, and that was good enough for us. But when we went to college, our friendships basically dissolved. We made new friendships with new people who surrounded us.

When I became an adult and married and had children, finding a similar type of best friend never did occur. I had different women with whom I could speak about different things, but I didn't have that best friend. In all honesty, I didn't need it while my family and my marriage was good. It wasn't until I fell into deep depression that I suddenly had this obsession with getting a best friend like I had before high school.

I became even more depressed as I focused so much of my attention on what I did not have in my life. I believed that other people had these close best friends and that the reason why I didn't

have one was that there was just something wrong with me, something unlovable about me. Then I began getting upset with God because he was giving everyone else a best friend but not me.

Little did I know that this obsession with a best friend was really just a torturous mirage from the enemy to make me even more miserable. If he could get me thinking that God didn't care enough about me to give me a best friend, or get me focused on all of my flaws so that I thought I was incapable of having friends, it was a double whammy and a big winner for him. Thinking about a

best friend just made me feel worse, like a misfit who would never get off of the island.

Being Chosen

In my time spent with Christian women with depression, I have heard the same cry of the heart for a best friend, one person who they could talk to and spend time with and who understands them. Someone they could tell all of their problems to who would understand. Most importantly, this person would choose them over every other person. Being chosen over everyone else is paramount in the definition of a best friend. This “being chosen” finally means to her that she is acceptable.

Conversely, not having a best friend means she is not acceptable.

Of course, the real problem here is the lie that if you are not chosen over everyone else to be someone's favorite, there must be something wrong with you. Women feel this way about men not choosing them for marriage or asking them out. It is yet another lie of the enemy, bolstered by the media and society, that popularity equals value.

But it doesn't. Neither friendship nor romantic relationships will give you true value. That only comes from God assigning your value through the

sacrifice which Jesus made for you on the cross. Value is always dependent upon what someone else will pay for something. God was willing to pay for you with the life of His only son. Jesus was willing to pay for you with His own life. How many people do you know who would give up their life for you?

Many women believe that the act of being chosen is what they want. But being chosen is just a means to an end. Their real goal is to be valuable, significant, loved. No human being is truly capable of doing that for another on a consistent basis. What a woman is really yearning for is the acceptance,

significance, value, and love that only Jesus can offer them. This is true in both the case of friendships and romantic relationships.

Therefore, if being chosen is what you want, then you can have that freely. God chose you before the foundation of the world to be His, to be conformed into the image of His son, to make you for himself, to take you as His bride. I know your knee-jerk reaction is to say that this does not count, but what could count more? I challenge your thinking in this area. Are you going by prevalent human wisdom or the truth that is based on the Word of God?

This is going to be of the utmost importance to you in this matter. If you are determined to believe that a human being's acceptance of you takes precedence and has more value than God's acceptance of you, then you will be severely and sorely disappointed throughout your life. People are, at best, fickle, and at worst, outright selfish. They will always put themselves first, and they will always do what is best for themselves. The scriptures even say that Jesus did not entrust himself to men because he knew what was in them. It is only the spirit of God within a man that can redirect him into the selfless

and giving agape love of God
exemplified by Him giving his only
begotten son to die on a cross for our
sins.

Earning Your Value

Before we go any further, we must address this issue. I want you to know right now that if you feel like you must do something to earn your value, that is not your fault. Someone taught you that lie either through their words or behavior, and it is buried very deep within you. You can't really think your way out of that one. By this time in your life, you are just going by the feeling that it is true.

It comes from something called codependency, where you learn that you have to somehow perform to be loved and accepted. This is most likely due to the actions or lack of interest of your parents. But God is nothing like your parents, and He doesn't require anything from you to be loved by Him. Once you consciously choose to believe that truth, your life will be revolutionized.

Still having trouble coming to terms with this? Imagine you are in high school. You like the captain of the football team. He likes the captain of the cheerleading squad. You feel rejected and unfit

because the person you liked did not like you back but chose someone else.

But then you find out that the president of the chess club thinks that you are the greatest thing since sliced bread. Here is another person who has chosen you over all other people, and yet you still feel rejected and unlovable. Why?

Because you are consciously assigning more value to one person's opinion of you than to another. So if you can consciously choose to assign value to one person's opinion, then why not consciously choose to assign value to what God thinks about you? You really

do have that choice. You can deliberately choose to build your self-worth on what God says about you instead of what the football player said about you.

In reality, the reason why the opinion of the president of the chess club didn't matter to you was because you wanted the football player. You weren't attracted to the chess club president; you didn't want him. In the same way, if you do not desire God and his approval and love in your life, then you will always be searching for a human being to provide that for you instead.

If this is true in your life, then this is a matter of soul searching for you in regard to your relationship with God. Do you really know Him? Do you know how He feels about you and what He thinks about you? Do you really believe that He exists, and that you matter to him? Maybe that is why His opinion is not valuable to you.

But the Word says that God loves you with the compassion of a mother for her unborn child. An unborn child does not have beauty for others to admire, does not act in any pleasing way and can do absolutely nothing to obtain or earn its worth. And yet a mentally healthy

mother still cherishes and loves the unborn child. God values you in the exact same way. It has absolutely nothing to do with your looks or your abilities. He values you solely because you belong to Him; you are His child.

But it gets even better than that. Earthly parents cannot select what their child would look like nor what its abilities would be. But since our Father is also the God of the universe, He fashioned and formed us according to His specific design to be exactly what He wanted us to be. I know it is tempting to say, "But look what I did with myself. Look at how

I messed up my life. Surely He must be disappointed in me.”

But the truth is, before you lived one day, God saw all of the days of your life lined up and knew every decision you would make and what you would do before you ever did it. Knowing all of this, He STILL decided to have you be born exactly the way that you are. You are not a disappointment to Him, because He already knew what you would do and still decided to create you and love you just as you are.

And for those of you who are like I was, obsessed with the fact that I was never

beautiful or pretty enough for any boy to ever approach me because of how I looked, God does not see us as others see us. He does not look on the outward parts of a man, but looks into the inside of the heart. Even more so, He sees us as we will be in heaven, completed and perfected. When He looks at us, He doesn't see our mess ups and screw-ups; He sees the righteousness of Christ for those of us who have accepted Christ's sacrifice and payment for our sins and who have taken Him as our Lord.

Once you accept that you have already been chosen, chosen by someone

greater than the captain of the football team, you don't have to be chosen by anyone else. You can have friends without the necessity of making someone choose your friendship over other friendships simply so you can feel valuable and significant.

Friendships were never intended to bear the burden of conveying value to another person. Friendship was meant only to make each person a little happier than they were before they met each other. That is a very important limitation on friendships, one which you must accept or you will not be able to

maintain any friendships that you do make.

There are so many women who get caught up in this lie, this mirage of a best friend which every other woman has except them. This keeps them devaluing themselves when there is no reason to. Because they cannot have a best friend, they will not accept and enjoy simple friendship as it is. If someone does not choose them over everyone else, they feel rejected, instead of feeling accepted by the person extending the opportunity to be friends.

The worst part is that the longer they go without a friend, the longer they feel like they will never get a friend, and the worse they feel about themselves, like there is something wrong with them. This makes them afraid to even try to make friends for fear of rejection. The cycle is horrible and increases their feelings of isolation.

What A Friendship Is Not

Many women with depression often fall into a pattern of isolation, one that may extend for such a long period of time that they actually forget how to make friends. They see themselves as nice and funny and faithful and believe that they would make a good friend.

However, either they are unable or unwilling to reach out to make new friends, or at this point are unsure of what to do to make friends or keep them. Their self-esteem may have sunk to such a low point that they cannot

imagine someone wanting to be friends with them. If they have attempted to reach out towards people to create new friendships and have not been successful, that will add to their sensitivity and reluctance to try again.

A big issue is often that they do not realize what friends are looking for and whether or not they have what potential friends are looking for at that very moment. *(I say “that very moment” because friendship can be affected by location, interests, maturity, sickness and a host of other things that cause friends to grow apart.)* I think a definition of what friendship is not would

probably be very appropriate here. Many people think that friendship means someone who is going to be their best friend, who will always be there for them, will be available whenever they need to talk, and with whom they will be able to share absolutely everything, including their absolute worst feelings. However, that is not necessarily what everyone wants in a friendship nor what most people are capable of providing in a friendship.

To most people, the picture of a best friend tends to look a lot like the Junior High version. You go to all your classes together, eat lunch together, do

homework together, talk about the mean girls together, spend the night together and talk about boys together. But that is not the adult version of a best friend.

Adult friends don't get to spend everyday together because they have jobs and/or sometimes families. They don't get to put each other first in their lives because they normally have other people who take priority like spouses, children, boyfriends, etc. But the ideal memory of that best friend remains like a childhood longing that mocks us because it doesn't exist in adulthood.

It is also a tool that the enemy uses to torment us. It is like the fallacy that there is another person out there for you that will fully complete you and you'll never need another person in your life again. This person will love and accept every annoying thing that you do and think it is adorable. They will never disagree with you, never get upset with you, never think about how life would be without you.

The truth is that human beings are incapable of always loving and accepting everyone else just the way they are. Human beings are innately selfish, and their bent leads them to do

what is best for them if they are not swayed by the Holy Spirit to do something that benefits someone else more than it does them. No one single person can possibly fulfill all the needs, desires, and dreams of another person. The only one who can do that is Jesus.

Now I can hear in your head the thought that says, "But other people have best friends like this. Why can't I?" Really? Name these people that you know who have these best friends. Name me five. Name me three. Name me just one.

To clarify, I do know of mothers and daughters who have a close enough

relationship that they can call each other at any time to share. They may have gone shopping together and went on trips together and have been best friends. But that does not happen very often, and normally a woman still needs other friends to round out her life.

When I have asked that question (who do you know has a best friend) of other people, they have been unable to tell me who has a Junior High best friend type friendship. They just assume that other people have them. And that assumption propels the lie that other people have something that makes them happy that you don't have. And if

other people have it and you don't have it, then God is withholding it from you. That is the second part of the lie.

It is possible to find another person who is a kindred spirit. They can have some of the same interests, the same sense of humor, the same outlook on life, the same spiritual beliefs. But no one is going to be a perfect match. And then you have the annoying realities of adulthood, which are called responsibilities. They get in the way of getting to spend a lot of quality time with people that we like.

When pressed a little harder for where their picture of best friends came from, it was normally people who work together in the same environment and see each other often. What they have in common is the people around them and the job that they do. They can complain about what they both know is wrong, rejoice about what they both think is right, talk about who they don't like, and that allows for a best friend type relationship during the season that both work together.

But for this Junior High version of best friends to occur, the two women must be single, and have no other

responsibilities other than their job. If either of them gets involved with a boyfriend, things immediately change. They have less time to spend together. If either of them changes jobs, they will spend less time together and most likely drift apart. This is the reality of friendship for adults.

Just as romantic comedies ruin a woman's chances for enjoying the relationship she currently has or may have in the future (by painting an unrealistic ideal), this picture of best friends ruins a woman's chances for having a healthy adult friendship. She expects from a friendship more than

another woman is most likely able to provide, and that leaves her always feeling cheated. If only she did not have this fantasy picture of a friendship in her mind, she could develop friendships with different women to meet her different needs and desires.

If you are basically expecting a friendship that entails talking to each other every day throughout the day and in the evening, spending your spare time together doing things that you both enjoy, then what you are really looking for is a mate. Friends are not supposed to take the place of a spouse. Friends are meant to supplement your life, and

multiple friends can supplement different areas of your life and bring you great joy.

Many women do not understand that their over expectations of friendship will ruin any attempts at having a realistic friendship. The more expectations you have of someone else making you happy, the more pressure they will feel to meet those needs. That very pressure will make the person not want to be friends with you, because pressure is not a part of the friendship definition or model.

What A Friendship Is

We've discussed what a friendship is not. Let's talk about what a friendship is for adult women. Adult female friendship is intended to enrich each person's life with positivity and help relieve the feelings of isolation when we go through hard times. Adult friendships do not expect the other person to put their friendship first over all of their other responsibilities.

Friendships fall in line after family and work obligations and are a treat and a

privilege that add value and enjoyment to our life. They are not our entire life. They just make our life a little better when we have the time and opportunity to spend with them.

Not all friendships are created equal either. You will have work friends, church friends, old school friends, and possibly hobby friends. Each friendship will have varying degrees of intimacy, and that intimacy is earned over time through shared experiences. Inside jokes come from spending enough time with someone to have created these jokes.

You will not be able to tell each friend everything, because in all honesty, not each friend will be able to keep your secrets. Not all of your friends will understand where you are coming from when you share personal thoughts. And you will have some friendships which you can only tolerate for a short period of time.

Many friendships are seasonal. If you do not have the time to spend together, chances are that the friendship will take a hiatus. It can be picked right back up when the shared experiences occur once again. That is because most friendships are based on

responsibilities, circumstances and availability. If any of those three characteristics change, then the friendship will change.

There is also the possibility that problems will arise in your friendship. Disagreements, changes in likes and dislikes, and even preferences to spend time with someone else can affect the friendship. There will be seasons when someone has more of a need for one friend and other seasons where they need a different type of friend. Although we like to think of friendships as permanent and unchanging, they are no

more permanent and unchanging than the people who make up the friendships.

The healthiest people have a wide range of friends to meet their different areas of need. You have spiritual friends to whom you can turn when you are facing spiritual challenges. You have funny friends who can make you laugh when you are feeling sad. You have wise friends who can help you figure out a problem. You have adventurous friends who get you out of the house to do things you normally wouldn't do. You have kindred spirits who share some key elements of your past experiences, so you are able to talk to them about

things without having to explain what you mean, which can be very comforting.

The most important thing you need to remember about friendships is that they are not forever, and they are not intended to be a replacement for a primary love relationship. When you don't have a boyfriend or a spouse (or your marriage is not good), a friend is not intended to fill that gap. It is possible to lose friends when you start putting additional responsibilities on the friendship that were never a part of the original unspoken contract.

Have you ever had a friend whose company you enjoyed, but only for short periods of time? After a while they got on your nerves. Then you have other friends around whom you can stay for long periods.

If you can understand that you feel this way about other friends, you have to also accept that you are that friend to other people. Some people will only be able to spend a small amount of time with you, while others may enjoy your company for longer periods of time. Expecting everyone to want you to be their primary friend is unrealistic and will set you up for great disappointment.

What People Want In Friendship

Now let's talk about what people want in a friendship. Primarily, people want friends to make them feel better. It is a selfish proposition, but every person has the right to choose friends who make them feel better. They are looking for someone who, after they have spent time with them, they feel better than before they spent time with them.

They were feeling bad; they picked up the phone and talked to their friend, and they felt better. They had a long day,

met up with their friend for dinner and felt better afterward. They wanted to go on an adventure, and because of the friend, they were able to do that and felt better afterward. The primary goal of friendship is to feel better.

The problems occur in friendships when one person is no longer making the other person feel better. Perhaps they are going through a rough time and are focused on what is wrong. Their conversation revolves around their problems, and during that time period, they do not have it within themselves to focus on the other person and make them feel better. Whoever is on the

losing end of the friendship will start backing away. Those are the unwritten rules of friendship. It may sound unfair, but that is the basis of friendship, feeling better.

But you already know this, because that's the reason why you want a friend. You want to feel better. If you are depressed or have chronic pain, it's possible to be fixated on the idea of a friend who will make you feel better.

Things That Can Ruin A Friendship

If preoccupation with your own pain causes you to talk primarily about that pain and a lot of your negative emotions, you will not be able to offer something to your friend to make them feel better. You are basically just asking them to make you feel better. Please note that the key word is “primarily”, meaning that's all you are really talking about. It is okay to have days where you are down and do not have something to offer. But if that becomes the norm,

don't be surprised if the other person no longer wants to be as close to you as they once were.

There is also the addition of your frame of mind. Some temperaments have a predisposition to see rejection everywhere they look. They are waiting for someone to disappoint them or hurt them or reject them, and so they will read into words or situations more than what is really there. This also happens to people with shame, with the feeling that there is just something wrong with them that cannot be fixed. They are very sensitive to others who might appear to be insinuating that there is something

wrong or not acceptable about what they have done or who they are. This will sabotage a friendship very quickly.

Then you have certain temperaments who differ in the number and type of friendships they have. Some temperaments do not want any friends (I'm not kidding - their graph has no line on it in this area), while for other temperaments, there are never enough friends to be made. So you may want to be friends with someone who just doesn't have a need for friends, or who has so many that you will just have to accept that you will be rotated in as the person has time. The ones with fewer

friends are normally more loyal and committed, while the temperaments with a lot of friends are usually less so.

Then there is the very real possibility that you will hurt someone else's feelings, and they will not be able to get over it. They are unable to accept an apology or forgive and forget. You may not have done anything intentionally to hurt them, but they may be fragile enough to be easily hurt and not easily re-friended. But to be fair, there has probably been someone in your past who hurt your feelings and whom you decided you no longer wanted to be

close friends with. It happens on both sides to pretty much everyone.

A big obstacle to friendships is the horrible phrase, “But I wouldn't do it like that!” The expectation that other people should think like you, feel like you, and act like you will ruin a friendship faster than anything else. No one is going to be exactly like you, and friends must have the ability to allow the other to be who they are wherever they differ.

All parties must respect differing opinions, as long as the friendship is not built upon whatever that opinion is. If you are prayer partners, and one of you

decides that prayer is no longer important, there goes the friendship. But most differences of opinion are not friendship breaking. Remember, if that particular opinion is so important to you, either release the friendship, or spend time with another friend who shares that opinion. That is the benefit of having multiple friends.

Finally, you must accept the fact that not everyone that you want to be friends with is going to want to be friends with you. You must be able to see this **not as rejection but as redirection**. In the same way that not every client is a good fit for every business, every person you

see as a potential friend may not be a good fit for you. As a Christian seeking God's will at all times, we must be as thankful about the relationships from which He saves us as the relationships which He allows us to enjoy. Trust God that He knows who is best for you in each season of your life, and let Him release from your life those who need to be on their way.

The Story Of The Season Of My Best Friend

I had one particular friend whom I loved with all of my heart. She was like the sister I never had. We went to church together. She had a dream to build a non-profit organization to help the community. I was unemployed and had the time and ability to help her make it happen. We spent a lot of time together and became even closer. The nonprofit was a success and opened.

But then something happened. She told me she no longer wanted me working in the office but only outside raising money. I did not want to do that, as my best talents were administrative. I could do marketing for a period, but that is not something I can do in the long run. Finally she admitted that several people had mentioned something negative about me and that she didn't want me in the office.

I was very hurt, and I didn't understand why she was doing this. I guess she felt betrayed that I wouldn't continue to raise money for her. I felt unappreciated and dumped. Our friendship basically ended

up being destroyed, and what was worse, her husband was my husband's best friend. My husband blamed me for the loss of the only couple we spent time with and loved like a brother and sister.

I literally mourned the loss of that friendship for years. I could not think about her without my heart hurting and experiencing a pain in the pit of my stomach. We even had them over to our house to ask them to forgive us for anything we had done wrong and told them that we had never intended to hurt them. Their response was to leave and not speak to us for years.

We were both devastated. Neither my husband nor I make close friends very easily. There was a huge hole in our lives. Neither of us could understand what we could have done that was so horrible that they could not forgive us and would just drop us like they did. We had invested so many hours, so much work, and even money in their non-profit, and they just deserted us.

I prayed a few years later that God would touch my heart and mind so that when I saw her at church, I would not remember all of those close times and mourn them. I asked Him to make her

like someone who was just an acquaintance, someone I just knew at church. And that is exactly what He did for me. It was like He erased from my memory those close times and I was able to breathe again.

After a few years, I invited them to my husband's birthday party and they actually came. At that time, she admitted that she had listened to a woman who hated me and had made accusations against me. In the end, that woman caused her horrible headaches, heartaches and serious problems for the nonprofit. She told me she wished she had never listened to her. Still, no matter

how many times I asked her to have lunch or call me, she never did. She went on with her life without me, obviously not really caring to ever be my friend again. I had no value in her life.

In one of my women's step study groups, someone pointed out that she only appeared to want my close friendship as long as I could build her nonprofit for her. That never crossed my mind before. Unfortunately, it appeared that that is exactly how it was. When I no longer served the purpose, she no longer had any use for me or my friendship.

But recently, God starting moving this couple back into our lives. They have become a supporter of our ministries and have even agreed to serve as Board of Directors. In a private conversation with my old friend, she shared horror story after horror story of things that happened to her husband and herself during the period of time she and I were not connected.

God showed me at that moment that she had been going through her own issues that took up every waking moment, from problems with the non-profit, family issues, and other issues. Although it didn't change the fact that I

was not an important or desired part of her life, it did explain how other more pressing and time consuming issues had continued to separate us. God revealed that there was more going on that met the eye, more than I could have ever imagined, and that none of it had to do with me or my husband. It was simply that our season had ended in that capacity as close friends.

Now, I don't expect anything from her. If she chooses to spend time with me and be my friend again, that would be wonderful, but I don't expect us to be best friends again. She is still extremely busy with work and her non-profit and

family matters. But I could accept a regular friendship with her if she offered it again. On the other hand, my life goes on happily and will not suffer that much without her.

Some stay and some go, but I do not cling to any of them anymore. Instead, I enjoy them while they are in my life and allow God to move them around as He sees fit. As a matter of fact, the weekend I started writing this book, I spent two nights in a mountain cabin with three of my friends from my last Celebrate Recovery Step Study group, playing board games, sharing meals, singing praise songs and laughing until

our sides hurt. I finally have healthy and realistic friendships, which is what I want for you too.

Every day is not like it was in the cabin, all relaxed, laughing and games. Since that weekend, I have barely gotten to see my friends because we all have responsibilities and families. But I cherish the memories of that weekend and hope for a time when we can do it again in the future. They are the bright spots of my life, but I do not expect to enjoy them every day.

Rules For Making New Friends

1. Remember the goal - that others feel better AND you feel better.
 - a. The other person wants to feel better after spending time with you. However, there is not a one size fits all mentality here. Sometimes they will want to laugh; sometimes they will want to cry; sometimes they will just want to be left alone or sit in silence. Sometimes they will want to go out to eat, or talk

on the phone, or go to a movie or just sit around the house. And sometimes they will not want to be with you at all. You have to be ok with this, because once you start putting pressure on them to do things for you, they will pull away from you. That's why ideally you should have more than one friend.

- b. You want to feel better after spending time with them. Find people who have common interests, who have the same sense of humor,

who have the same values. The most important thing is that they respect you and that you respect them. You are both allowed to have differing opinions and live your own lives without being judged by the other person. If they are a Christian and in willful sin, it's the job of the Holy Spirit to convict them, not yours. Just love them the best that you can, and if you want to spend time with them, do it. If you no longer want to be a part of their life, then don't. Just don't condemn them, because

when they stop sinning, you will have left that door open to renew the friendship.

- c. There will be times when you or your friend may not be up to the challenge of making the other person feel better. Maybe one of you is depressed or exhausted or distracted. At these times, both of you will have to be flexible and accept the other person's inability to connect with you. It will happen to everyone, and to throw away a possible good friendship

simply because someone is having a bad day is not in your best interests. As Ecclesiastes 9:11 says, time and chance happen to everyone, and your friend has no control over work issues, family members, automotive issues, sickness, etc. So treat them as you would want to be treated when things suddenly get out of control and you can't keep commitments with friends.

d. You may also find that, after a few times spent with

someone, they may not be interested in or have it within them to truly care about you and how you feel (and vice versa). In the case when the other person is really only in it for herself, you will need to make a decision about how much time (if any) you want to spend on the relationship. Maybe you can spend time with her once in awhile to have fun or to have a dump session about what's wrong. Alternately, there is nothing wrong with severing a relationship either, as long as

you do it kindly and in a loving manner. Remember, friendship is a nice addition to life, but it is not the basis of life. Christ is the basis of life, and only HE can provide the needs you may be trying to get from friendship.

- e. As an extension of this, there are some people who are going to take advantage of you in the name of friendship. If you are at all codependent and just want to fix people, make them feel better by solving their problems and

making their life easier or if you feel like you have to earn someone's friendship by becoming indispensable to them, you are sure to be used by someone. You will have a broken radar and be inexplicably drawn to people who are needy and who have a talent for appearing helpless so that others will do things for them that they do not want to have to do themselves.

This always turns out badly, as the Rescuer starts resenting all they are doing for

the Victim, and the Victim keeps on taking and taking without really giving back, increasing the Rescuer's resentment. No matter how much the Rescuer gives to and does for the Victim, it is never enough. Finally, the Rescuer starts complaining to others about all they are doing for the Victim, how the Victim isn't really doing things right and pushing the Victim to start doing something for herself. That's when the Rescuer becomes the Persecutor of the Victim.

The Victim senses that the Rescuer is getting fed up with them and turns on the Rescuer (becoming the Persecutor). They get angry at the Rescuer and say things like, “Who do you think you are, telling me what to do? You’re not perfect! Mind your own business. I don’t need you.” The Rescuer and Victim part ways, with the Victim bad-mouthing the Rescuer about what a false friend they are, what a hypocrite they are and how they attacked them.

The Rescuer is once again hurt and wounded because “all they tried to do was help.” I say “once again” because the Rescuer will just go out and find another Victim, and the Victim will just go out and find another Rescuer. It is a very unhealthy cycle, and it’s called the drama triangle.

Whether you play the Victim or the Rescuer, this would explain why you go through so many “friends”, and you think they all turn on you. If you don’t make friendships

based on doing for or receiving from other people, then you shouldn't experience this triangle again. But the reality is that you will automatically fall into these friendships until you are healed of your codependency.

- f. Remember that there are seasons to most friendships based on responsibilities, circumstances and availability. Always be prepared that the person may not be available for you, so you do not carry hurt and

bitterness against that person simply because they couldn't be there for you due to other responsibilities. It is ok for others to decide they no longer want to be friends with you, and you also have the right to decide you no longer want to be friends with them. Friendship is not a promise or a lifelong contract. It is the cherry on top of the sundae, not the sundae.

2. If you are out of practice making friends, you may be anxious about starting again. The easiest thing to

do is to ask them questions about themselves. Where did they come from? How many siblings do they have? What is their favorite food or hobby or tv show? Keep the questions positive. The goal is to show interest, be a good listener, and make them feel important, accepted and better than before they had a conversation with you. Make yourself the type of friend that people look forward to talking to. Make sure that you are listening just as much, if not more than you are talking.

3. Talk about something upbeat, fun or encouraging. Remember that you want other people to WANT to be around you. For those of you who have been focused on the negatives in life, this may be a challenge. If you have isolated yourself and don't go anywhere or do anything, then it may be time to find a hobby, one that you can enjoy and for which you can then find other enthusiasts. Friendships built on common pleasures is great fun, can lend excitement as you talk about upcoming projects and spur appreciation as you brainstorm together. Find a game

you like and find others who enjoy it as well. Find those who are at the same competitive level as you (if they are more or less competitive, one of you will not enjoy it when they lose and may get grumpy), so you can both enjoy your company as much as the game.

4. Don't talk about your problems in every conversation. This is important if you struggle with negative emotions like depression, anxiety, stress or chronic pain. If you have spent a lot of time dwelling on what's wrong in your

life, it is possible to become like Eeyore in the Winnie The Pooh story, always finding things wrong, being pessimistic and expressing criticism. This will not draw anyone except another complainer, and although you may enjoy a gripe session every now and then, healthy friendships are not based on complaining.

5. Allow God to redirect you away from some people ; don't think of it as rejection. If you completely wipe the word "rejection" from your friendship vocabulary and replace it with "redirection", there is no need

to fear approaching people for friendship. If you don't have to worry about being rejected, but just take it as God redirecting and protecting you from that relationship, you can be confident and reach out to possible new buddies.

6. Don't expect them to have the same availability as you do unless you are both unemployed and available all day every day and have no one else to take care of. If you are both retired and can spend a lot of time together, that's wonderful. But if you are not both

in the same place in life, with the same circumstances, then you will be very disappointed if you expect them to always be there for you. Remember, the “best friend” of Junior High is not a reality unless you are roommates. So spread your interests among different friends who are available at different times. Those with younger children will have less free time, so perhaps you might try to befriend someone who is older and whose children are grown. Reach outside of your normal sphere and you may find some really treasured friends.

Where To Find Friends

Facebook gives you the online possibilities of remote friends. With online and phone video capabilities now, you can talk with someone like they are there in the room with you. You could even meet up with them at an event for a day or weekend.

You can find endless numbers of interest related groups there, so if you have interests already, then find your compatriots. If you don't have interests, then it is up to you to try different things

until you find what you like. But you really need to have some interests to discuss to be an engaging friend.

Check out groups available for you to attend or join in your church or local community. Like to sing? Try the church or community choir. Like to read? Find a book club (yes, they DO still have book clubs). If you are single, find a single's group. If there are areas in which you could volunteer, then do it, and you will find people with the same passionate heart you have.

Attend a bible study, or if you are hurting in any area of your life, I really

recommend Celebrate Recovery, which you can find throughout the world. They have large and small group weekly meetings, as well as my favorite, Step Study groups that last 9 months and build quality, intimate friendships. Again, life happens, and after the 9 months, everyone can get busy with work, family and activities, but at least during those 9 months, you have a great group of women serious about working on their hurts, habits and hangups.

Last of all, I am offering on my web site a [Friendship Forum](#). Its entire purpose is for you to introduce yourself and practice making friends. There are rules

posted for you to follow, but here you will know that there are other women looking to make friendships like you are.

If you are interested, go to <http://PennyHaynes.com> and join for FREE. You'll get my free ebook, **“CRAZIFIED & Out of Control: Why You STILL Can't Control Yourself and the ABCs of Changing That”**, access to my 28 lesson **“Introduction to Life Patterns”** course and access to monthly online classes on different topics. There are over one hundred posts for Christian Women With Depression, plus devotions and weekly messages to help

you work through any issues that you have.

If there are other issues that are holding you back (such as being a continual Rescuer or Victim in the triangle), or if your feelings of inadequacy and lack of self worth are getting in the way of you making friendships, you can join as a [Counseling & Courses](#) member and work with me one-on-one every day. I even have a [Courses Only](#) membership where you can use bibliotherapy to read and work on your issues by yourself, asking for help whenever you want.

Ecclesiastes 4:**9** Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:

10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

I hope that this book has helped you clarify the issues that may have been hindering you from finding, making and keeping friends. Friendships are like bright spots of sunshine in a life where clouds can often cause shadows. My prayer for you is to find multiple friends, one for every occasion.

However, I also pray that you will never expect any of them to fill the emptiness inside of you. That is a God-shaped hole inside of you, and friends will never fill it, only the Lord. Friends are a lovely accessory to life, but always remember that Jesus IS life. Real love, joy and peace will only come from the Holy Spirit living inside of you. The best of all worlds is to have Jesus be your “all in all” and have friends with whom you can share the Love of your life.