

# REAL LIFE SOLUTIONS

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## Enriching Your Life Through Relationships

**“W**hat makes people happy?” That’s what a group of psychologists asked participants in a study on happiness. They now have scientific evidence telling us what must go on in our lives in order to experience a happy life: friendships. We are social creatures and when our lives center around friendships, we experience happiness.

Some recent research on aging has resulted in the same finding. Scientists interested in how people age asked another question, “Why do some people grow old more gracefully than other people?” The studies concluded that one of the best things a senior can do as the years pass is to maintain relationships and stay connected with friends.

So, how can you enrich your life with friendships?

### **Place yourself in a position to meet people**

Find something you have a passion for.

When you fall in love with an activity, you are in a position to meet people with the same interest. It doesn’t matter if you love reading, kayaking, gardening or golf. What matters is that you have something in life you can’t wait to do; when you are not doing it you are dreaming about doing it. This passion is your magic carpet to meeting others and forming life-satisfying relationships.

### **Reach out to others with a spirit of friendliness and conversation**

Remind yourself that people generally love it when others show an interest in them. You can show interest in people by reaching out to them—by smiling and saying hello, calling them up on the phone or making plans to have fun together.

### **Nurture your friendships**

Friendships need to be nurtured; they are alive and need to be fed. Nurture your relationships by taking action to avoid the two main reasons why friendships fall apart:

- People refuse to forgive and forget when hurt feelings and disappointments occur in the friendship. Friendships need to be repaired from time to time and saying “I’m sorry” can work wonders.

### **Be open to enriching your life with friendships**

If you would like to enjoy more happiness in life, consider creating a circle of friends or adding to the friendships you already enjoy by following this three-step plan: The interests you love in life will lead you to people you feel connected to. Once you meet others, reach out to them with conversation. Once you have a friendship, nurture your friendship and be prepared at times to repair your friendship.

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- People start taking each other for granted. You can nurture your relationships by having fun, showing compassion, being loyal, giving compliments, helping out and doing favors.

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