

The Lost Art of Friendship

"Let's talk about building and keeping friendships for a lifetime"

Dan & Cherri Williams

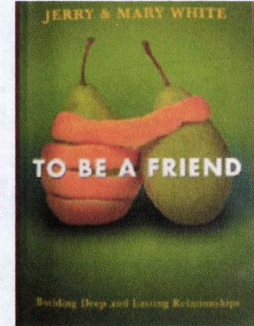
OKC Metro Navigators

September - 2014 OKC Fall Navigator Conference

I. Introduction & Goals

• Goals of the Workshop

- ✓ Understand the importance of Christ centered Friendships
- ✓ Consider your needs and contribution in any Friendship
- ✓ Understand how to develop and sustain Life Long Friendships



• Cards Project (in small groups 2 – 3)

Introduce yourselves, discuss the meaning of the message on the card and how you see examples in your own life. Be prepared to share in large group how the message defined or clarified what Friendship is.

• Webster's definition of a Friend – one attached to another by affection or esteem, a favored companion, having a bond of mutual affection



Mark 3:13-14 "And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him and He appointed twelve, so they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach,"

"Most of us see Friends through the lenses of our past relationships, both positive and negative experiences, and the desire of our hearts to know and be known. You won't find an automatic solution for making and keeping friends. Friendships take effort. They hold a bit of mystery. They can't be manufactured. Yet they are priceless. A friend can be one of the greatest spiritual and emotional treasures of our lives." Jerry White

Reasons & Importance of Friendships?

- ✓ "We really do NEED each other, for the sharing of it all."
Chuck Swindoll

1 Cor 12:12, 18 "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all members of the body, though they are many, are as one body, so also is Christ. But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired."



- Inter-dependence on one another ... Independent Spirit
- Establish our purpose, meaning & fit within the body of Christ

It is impossible to over-emphasize the immense need humans have to be really listened to, to be taken seriously, to be understood. Paul Tournier

- ✓ **We both Receive and Contribute to one another.**

*"Each of our friends has contributed to the person we have become. We are a product of our families, our times, and our geographical roots. But friends mark us in profound ways. They alter our thinking, actions, desires, and ambitions, for good and for bad."
Jerry White.*

PROV 27:17 "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

Heb 10:24, 25 "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

II. Being a Friendship "Catalyst"

How do most Friendships start?
What Creates interest in Friendships?



- ✓ **Mutual Attraction**
 - Physical
 - Personality, intellect, similar interests, common background.
- ✓ **Common interests**
 - Hobbies & special interests
 - Work or family
 - Life purpose or calling or mission



*"Friendships without some level of common interest in work, family or hobbies seldom develop into lasting relationships. When we have overlapping interest that draws us together, we are more likely to enjoy being together - necessary element of friendship."
Jerry White.*

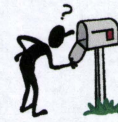
[LUKE 2:52 "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

- ✓ **Circumstances**
 - Live ... Work ... Play - God ordained opportunities to reach out
- ✓ **Intentionality** – someone must initiate ... Be there when needed !!!
 - No friendship is a one-way street. Friendship is mutual.
- ✓ **Time and Opportunity**
 - Don't expect instant friendship. Friendships grow over years, not months, often through repeated and consistent contact.
 - Hold Friendships in an Open Hand.
- ✓ **Testing**
 - No friendship develops beyond a casual state without some testing.
 - Mutual disagreements, arguments, misunderstandings, offenses, conflicts, and feelings of tension.
- ✓ **Mutual Openness and Transparent Communication (sharing)**
 - Superficial level (Facts) communications form the basis for trust.
 - Sharing a personal problem – test the waters
 - Vulnerable sharing (Risk taking) – Trust has been earned.



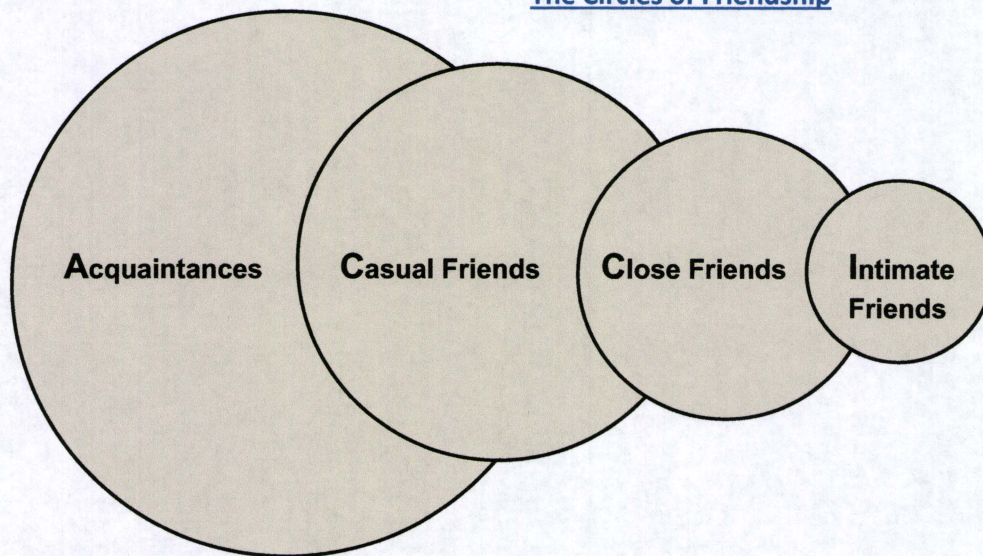
*"Friendships are built on degrees of openness."
Jerry White.*

Kinds of Friendships (Where are you headed?)

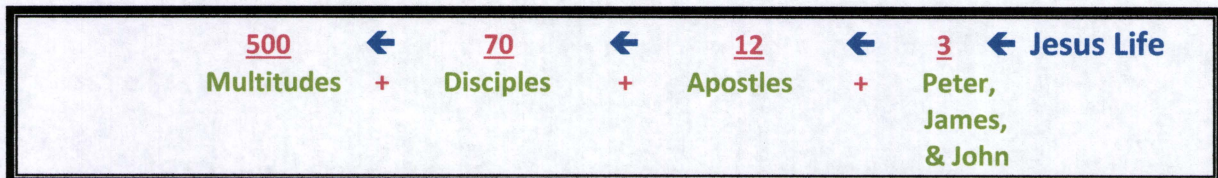


- ✓ **Acquaintances**
 - Every Friend once an acquaintance. Beginnings. Chance encounters. People we occasionally greet, brief interactions.
 - Estimate **500-1500 per year**
- ✓ **Casual Friends**
 - Regular contact (Gas Station, Grocery Store, Church.)
 - Call by first name, but may not know their last name.
 - *"Set a tone in our life interactions and open the possibility for future, closer friendships."*
 - Number depends of one's personality, context, age, and stage of life (**dozens – hundreds.**)
- ✓ **Close Friends**
 - Most of our meaningful relationships. Encourage and inspire us. Our Mentors.
 - Develop as we have repeated contact with one another. We engage in mutual activities. There is sharing on a deeper level, getting to know the thoughts and feelings of each other. They bring support, joy, caring, encouragement into our lives.
 - Numbers vary. Some have **20-30 close friends.**
- ✓ **Intimate ("Best") Friends**
 - People trusted the most, share with most deeply, and depend on most.
 - Most of us may have only **3-5** of these kinds of friends in our **lifetime.**

The Circles of Friendship



*"Every person has the capacity to develop intimate friendships."
Jerry White.*



Superficial (Factual) (Communication + Trust) Intimate (Personal/Deeper)

III. Architecture of Building a True Friendship ... Building Blocks !!!



What is at the heart of a Friendship that really makes it work?

"Close friendships do not just happen. In many ways, they are like a garden. Gardeners sow seeds, water, fertilize, and prune if they want to grow delicious vegetables. But there is much that gardeners cannot control: the amount of sunshine, whether the seeds are good or bad, and the amount of rainfall." Jerry White.

"Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship is a slow ripening fruit". Aristotle

A. Trust & Confidentiality

✓ **What is TRUST?** *It is knowing that any and all communication is safe with a friend. Confidentiality is a given; we are certain our friend will not break our confidence.*



[Luke 16:9-10 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much."

B. Stimulation to grow (mutual "Accountability")

"Some people stimulate your mind, energize your imagination, and stir your soul. They might not always make you comfortable, but they do help you grow and become a better person." Jerry White

2 Pe 3:1 "This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,"

PROV 13:20 "He who walks with wise men will be wise. But the companion of fools will suffer harm." (Challenges your choice of friendships !!!)

Accountability:

*"The willingness to answer for my life, to explain my actions, and supply the reasons why."
Chuck Swindoll*

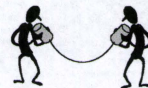
C. Fun – common interests, spontaneity, quiet moments, lots of interaction.

✓ "Laughter not only benefits us physically but also lightens our emotions and brings welcome distraction from the ordinary stresses of the day".

*Laughter is
an instant
vacation –
Milton Berle*

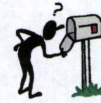
D. Love & Acceptance

✓ A requirement for intimate Friendship



"Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him." 1 Cor. 13:4-7 (TLB)

E. Self-sacrifice (the "Cost" of friendship)



"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than one lay down his life for his friends." Jn 15:12-13

Cost. What cost?

- ✓ Time
- ✓ Energy & Effort
- ✓ Vulnerability
- ✓ Unanticipated and Unplanned Costs

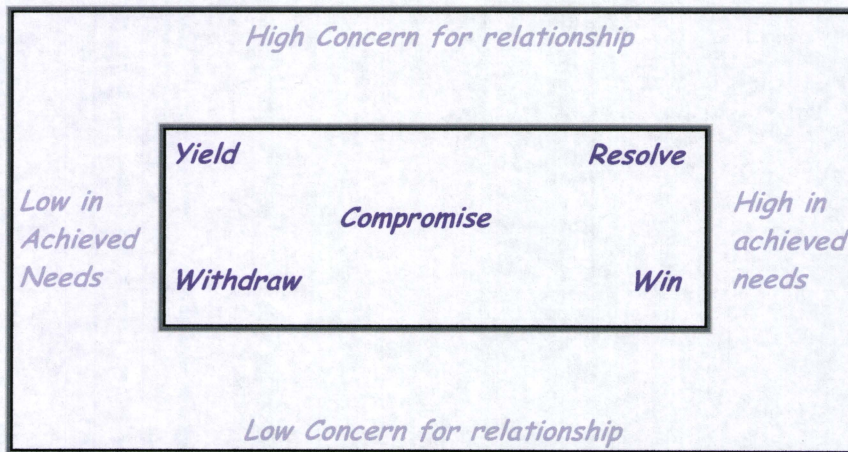


"Every relationship requires energy and effort, of which we have limited amounts. We cannot do everything and respond to everyone." Jerry White

IV. Resolving Conflict and Remaining Friends



5 styles of dealing with Conflict



By James Fairfield

"Conflict is a natural part of growth and family living. Many conflicts are simply symptoms of something else. Most people do not deal openly with conflict because no one has ever taught them effective ways of dealing with it." W. Norman Wright & Wes Roberts

- Withdraw** → Hopeless, inevitable, decline to even try.
- Yield** → Giving in to get along.
- Compromise** → Give a little to get a little.
- Win** → Focused on own interests, no matter the cost.
- RESOLVE** → Deal with the issues, protecting the relationship.



V. Benefits of Friendship (Exercise)

"Better is a neighbor (friend) who is near than a brother far away." PROV 27:10 (NASB)

"A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need." PROV 17:17 (NLT)

"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up." ECCl. 4:9-11



