

MODULE 4

Class Title: Friends – part 1 (1st part of a 2 lesson series)

Aim of the lesson: Handling peer pressure and other challenges while dealing with friends.

Category: Interpersonal skills

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion

Handout: in folder

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(Ta'awwudh) Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem

(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

(Du'a) Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

There are some key decisions that you make in your teen years that can help change your future. Choosing the right friends can be one of those and if you don't make wise decisions it could be the end of the world for you. If you feel you've blown it, all of us feel at some point in our lives that, 'Oh my God I've blown it!' all you have to do is get back on the track because this is how you learn. This is a part of the experience to start making smarter choices. The reason we are doing this class with teenagers is that you don't have the experience that requires you to maintain friends. It's like a balancing act and there aren't any set formulas but there are certain things that you will realize as you grow older. Since you have time now and the process of making friends has already started therefore out of experience we are going to talk about certain things which are going to help you to make smarter choices.

Slide 2:

There is this very interesting *Hadith* in *Bukhari* and *Muslim* and I'm going to base my two session on this particular *Hadith* in which *RasoolAllah* (pbuh) said:

A man asked the Prophet (pbuh) about the Hour (i.e. Day of Judgment) saying, "When will the Hour be?" The Prophet said, "What have you prepared for it?" The man said, "Nothing, except that I love Allah and His Apostle." The Prophet (pbuh) said, "You will be with those whom you love." We had never been so glad as we were on hearing that saying of the Prophet (i.e., "You will be with those whom you love.") Therefore, I love the Prophet, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and I hope that I will be with them because of my love for them though my deeds are not similar to theirs. (Anas (ra) narrated it).

So we see here that the Prophet (pbuh) is saying that everyone will be in the Hereafter with the person he loves.

So who do you think you will be with? Who do we love besides our family? Our friends! So if you will be raised with them what is *RasoolAllah* (pbuh) implying? Can anyone tell me? What is Muhammad (pbuh) implying? When he says that, yes?

Student: You are what your friends are.

Teacher: You are what your friends are, one thing and the chances of you having the same destination as theirs are very high because you were friends. Automatically, your destination in the hereafter can be the same. Why is it so, we are going to talk about that later.

Slide 3:

Our discussion in this class and the next class is going to be about four very important things as far as friends are concerned.

The first is surviving ‘ups and downs’ of friendships, secondly the hype about being ‘popular’, thirdly making and being a friend and last but not the least, ‘peer pressure’. These are the four things we are going to talk about in detail *inshAllah*.

Slide 4:

Now, friends are Allah (swt)’s way of taking care of us. There is nothing better than having a friend especially one around whom you can be yourself, that is the greatest feeling... not only at your age but this feeling will remain there for the rest of your life. If you have a good friend or a good set of friend it is a huge blessing from Allah (swt).

Slide 5:

But they can also upset you, they can turn on you, or gossip about you and it happens pretty often.

Slide 6:

So who do you chose as a friend? You can chose the high road by choosing a friend who would build you up, that’s one option and the second option is that you choose the low road by choosing friends who would bring you down. We all have this choice; nobody can push you into this. As far as relatives are concerned you never have a choice, you never said, ‘Okay, I want her as my sister’. You never have a choice with your *khala*, *phupho* {Aunts} or parents but choosing friends is totally your call, you decide who you want to be friends with.

Slide 7:

Very interesting *hadith* says:

Abu Huraira (ra) reported: The Prophet (pbuh) said, “A man is upon the religion of his friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends.” [Abu Dawud 4833]

When you choose your friend you must be careful and judge whom you're seeking for friendship. Why? Why should we be careful?

Student: They might be bad company.

Teacher: Bad company and the *hadith* I just quoted, that you'll be raised with them, that you will both have pretty much the same ending. Chances of you both being successful in the hereafter or failure in the hereafter could be pretty much the same because of your friendship.

Slide 8:

Now as far as making friends is concerned, it's a series of decisions and it is made again and again and again over many years, it's not like choosing your school which is done once in a life time and you're done. So you make friends in nursery then shuffling takes place in the middle school so you make new friends. In college you make more friends, then in university, neighborhood, family, you get married and some of your extended family become your friends. You make friends at work and so on, that's why you see it's an ongoing process and we need to learn the skills to make the right friends right now because whatever we learn from experience is going to affect us later in our lives. So we have to base our lives on a very wise outlook towards friends.

Slide 9:

Let's do a friend's check-up. (**Note to teacher:** distribute the handout and allow few minutes to fill it in)

There is no need for you to discuss it with us if you don't want, the point of doing this little exercise is to get an idea of where we all stand regarding our friends. Once you have a picture in front of you, this class will, *inshaallah* benefit you more.

Slide 10-11:

The first thing is surviving 'ups and downs' of friendship. Like with all other relationships this one is also not a bed of roses, agreed? It's not a bed of roses because sooner or later friends do show their true colors. Nobody is perfect, we all have weaknesses and the moment you start spending time together you can identify the true colors, the negative aspect of a person. It does happen.

Slide 12:

What else happens with friends sometimes? They dump you! It does happen, we hate talking about it because it's an insult if somebody has dumped me... it's an insult and I wouldn't want to talk about it but if this has happened to you, take comfort in the fact that this happened to a lot of us! Nobody likes to talk about it but it does happen, you discreetly notice somebody and you

really want to be her friend and she might give you a little bit of time but then she would go for someone else.

Dealing with fickle and inconsistent people is a very common challenge in friendship and especially in teenagers. How do you deal with them? Those who can't make up their mind if they like you or don't like you or if they really want to be with you? Sometimes they really seem very moody, they will spend time with you but the moment this other person comes they will look through you. It does happen so how do you deal with such people? How do you handle this situation? Any suggestions? After all you do have experience so what do you think we should be doing about such people?

Student: Confront them.

Teacher: You need to confront them, okay. What else?

Student: If they want to meet you it's okay but if they don't, don't force them.

Teacher: Don't force them. That's also very nice, very interesting. See the thing is that all of us are made of two things. There are certain things that are inside us that are part of our personality and the other thing is the things we possess. My clothes, my look, the way I carry myself, my accent, the way I smile, the way I interact with people, that's outwardly and then inwardly I'm softhearted, I'm caring, I listen to people, I go out of the way to help people out, that's you know within. Always choose friends who like you for who you are and not what you have and you will automatically get rid of these inconsistent fickle people because these people look for the outwardly things only.

So if you want to get rid of these people in your life, concentrate on people who are interested in your personality rather than the things that you have. If someone likes you because you're cool or likes you because of the way you talk then that person will not remain in your life for a very long time because he is going for outwardly things. Now there can always be exceptions but the things I'm telling you are coming out of experience and I'm sure a lot of these things you might have already experienced.

Slide 13: Not all friends are forever, the harshest reality at your age is to understand that not all friends are forever! You'll go like, 'What are you talking about? My best friend... there is no way I'm going to leave her!' but the thing is changes are going to take place as far as friends are concerned, but how and why?

Number one, they move or you move to different schools or different cities. They change or there is a change in your personality, you're growing every moment so there is a change in you. You're growing taller or gaining more weight and your hair is growing, likewise your personality is also evolving. You are not what you were three years back. Have you ever watched

your home video movie when you were eleven? Don't you hate it? 'Oh my God that's me?' That happens to all of us.

I remember I was showing this video to my daughters, and parents think you're very cute and we were watching this video of my children when they very young and my eldest daughter was seriously embarrassed. She was like, 'There is no way you're showing this to my husband' and I was like, 'But you're so cute...' and she was like, 'No there is no way you're showing this to my husband!'

So yes, we do get embarrassed. Why? Because we are changing, we are getting graceful day by day and we are getting older and we find things we did childish. We don't want to portray that personality to others.

And sometimes friends turn on you. So how do you handle this?

Slide 14:

Always allow friends their space and don't cling to them, this is like a golden rule that you should remember in your life. If they are worth keeping they will always be there they will never go anywhere but if you really want to lose a friend centre your life on them and you'll get rid of them. That's like again something that comes out of experience so make as many friends as you want to but never centre your life on them, this is all you need to do. The number of friends has no limit to it as long as they are not the centre of your life. So what do I mean by that?

Slide 15:

It is because if friends become the centre of your life it can topple you and how? Can anybody tell me how can it topple you?

Students: you will be disturbed very easily.

Teacher: Yes and besides that your centre of life will move from here to there so you will become inconsistent. Your emotional life will hinge on, firstly, how many friends you've got and secondly on how they've been treating you. You will very easily surrender to peer pressure if friends are the centre of your life.

And last but not least, these people can damage your relationship with others too. For example, your relationship with your parents can very seriously get damaged not by friends generally but because of the fact that you've made them the centre of your life. There is no problem in them but since you're giving them so much importance that you've made them the centre of your life, automatically this causes problem in your relationship with other people who should be very close to you.

Slide 16:

Instead of doing that if you cling to your principles then everything else, including the friends will fall in the right place. Now what principles are we talking about? What are principles? How do we make principles the centre of our lives?

Student: Limitations.

Teacher: Limitations. Yes, where do you get those limitations from?

Student: Limitations your parents have at home. What we learn from them.

Teacher: Okay.

Student: Your priorities.

Teacher: Your priorities. You, at the back?

Student: Your values and fundamentals.

Teacher: These are basically time tested natural laws that never go away, for example honesty, respect, responsibility. If you cling to these you will automatically have principles as the centre of your lives and another thing, as Muslims where can we get this comprehensive package of principles? Do we have to go here and there, 'what mom said, what the teacher said' No. What is the comprehensive package that we can get and where can we get it from? We as Muslims...

Student: Qur'an.

Teacher: The Quran. You just follow it and straight forward you've got a most comprehensive set of rules in the Quran, follow it and you have got principles as the centre of your life. You don't have to be fickle about it, why is mom saying this and why is the teacher saying this? No, you just follow this one book and you're set for your life and the best thing is that it has a very positive impact on the kind of friends you will make.

Slide 17:

Unlike friends, principles don't fail you, they don't upset you, they don't gossip, they don't turn on you and get up and move away. Putting principles in place will help you in making more friends, quite ironic but it does happen. What is the reason?

Slide 18:

There is only one reason, you will become a very steady person and everybody likes to hang around steady people. Do you want your friends to be steady in their personality? Do you like unsteady people? No? They confuse you. They don't know what they want from you. One time they're saying one thing the other time they are saying the other. They say they are having mood

swings so when you don't like such people how will people like you? You can have that steady personality too if you have only one thing as the centre of your life, and that is the Qur'an! Automatically people will start respecting you for who you are.

Slide 19:

Now a little bit about the hype you have about popularity.

Slide 20:

Tell me what comes to your mind when you hear the word popular? Do you crave for it or do you throw up? Let's be honest, how many of you crave for it? How many of you think it's not bad?

Student: There is nothing wrong with it.

Teacher: Raise your hand. Why aren't you raising your hand?

Student: I don't crave for it but there is nothing wrong.

Teacher: Fine, if you feel there is nothing wrong with it then raise your hand. And if you think that, 'Oh my God, when I think about this word I feel like throwing up.' Nobody? Nobody wants to throw up?

Slide 21:

Okay the thing is if you seriously want to throw up then automatically you connect this word popularity or being popular with people who are stuck up, snotty, bratty, arrogant people, or good looking kids who say the right things, they wear the right clothes and they think everyone adores them but in reality people actually dislike them. Popularity is the centre of their life. When we think about popularity in a negative way, we are thinking about people who have this craving for popularity as a centre of their life.

Slide 22:

And if you feel that this is something that you crave for or you feel that there is nothing wrong with it then automatically you link it up with people who are well liked, respected, decent, not stuck up, hard working and nice to everyone.

Slide 23:

So the thing is that popularity in itself is not a bad thing. There is nothing wrong in being popular. As long as that person does not think that he is better than others. This concept of popularity becomes yucky when you start thinking you're better than others. That's the deviation that comes when you crave being popular for the sake of becoming popular. You need to stop trying to be popular, if it comes naturally to you

Slide 24-25:

Some people naturally do become popular, there's something about them. By default, they come sit here in 'Perceptions' people start liking them, in school people start liking them, in family too. This is just how they are, they don't have to be like, 'Oh my God, I'm becoming popular I need to do something about it.' Take it as a blessing from Allah (swt). On the other hand, if you're a good person and you think positively about other people around you but you're not popular, it doesn't matter. Some people are very quiet, shy, they want to remain within themselves, if somebody would talk to them they are very sweet and polite but they wouldn't want to reach out to people, this is how Allah (swt) made them. All of us can't be shaped in one category, we all are different.

Slide 26:

There is a very interesting *Hadith*:

'To be alone is better than to have a bad companion and a good companion is better than being alone.' [Bayhiqi]

Unfortunately sometimes we make friends because we feel isolated and feel that, 'I have no choice then to be their friend because that is a popular group, I want to belong with them.'

Slide 27:

And since we are talking about belonging to a popular group there is a book written by Roseland Wiseman, it is about 'queen bees' and 'wannabes' in which she takes a look at popularity and fitting in. She talks about queen bees, who are the queen bees?

Slide 28:

The popular group and popularity means everything to them, they are very protective about their group. Nobody can enter our group, 'we are special', they don't say it but this is how they feel so this author calls them queen bees.

Slide 29:

Who are wannabes? Wannabes are the people who actually look up to the queen bees so they are caught up in the lure of popularity, they want to reach out and be a part of them but they can't and they just keep craving for it and they don't show it to you but heart in heart they think, 'Oh, I wish I was one of them, Oh I wish I belonged to them I wish they would take me in their group!'

Slide 30:

But then there is another very interesting group and they are called 'don't wannabes' neither popular nor losers opposite to the first two because they are comfortable in their skins. They are

not mean and they are of course very smart girls and they think popularity is over rated. So if someone is popular good for them I'm fine in my skin.

So what group do you want to belong to? The queen bee, wannabe or the don't wannabe? Where do you want to place yourself?

Student: Don't wannabe.

Slide 31:

Teacher: Why? What is the centre of these 'don't wannabe's'?

Student: Principles.

Teacher: Yes, principles!

Slide 32:

Whereas the first two, they have to wear certain type of clothes, they have to have a girly attitude, have a boyfriend, go to mix parties and perhaps smoke too. They would do anything to be labeled as cool or queen bees

Slide 33:

and on the other hand 'don't wannabes' go where they should go, they have very strong values and they enjoy being with their families and for the other stuff they wait till they get married so they don't get into the boy stuff at all. So queen bees and wannabes should look out because don't wannabes are here to stay, because their centre of life is 'principles'. Friends are there but they are not the centre of their lives. They wear what they should, according to their values whatever their values are and all their actions go hand in hand with their principles.

Slide 34:

Okay now the biggest fear that puts people in the second category of wannabes is the queen bees saying, 'How come you don't kid with us anymore?' This is something that stops you from becoming a 'don't wannabe' you don't want people to say that, 'oh, she is not one of us anymore, and she is different' and what is that one word they use for you then? They say you have changed; you're not cool any longer. If you have a fear of hearing this than automatically you're stopping yourself from becoming a don't wannabe. If you're not a queen bee and you're scared of being a don't wannabe where do you end up?

Student: Wannabe.

Teacher: The loser group, the wannabes.

Slide 35:

What do you do if you have friends and you change and pursue different interests, because if you are growing up and changing so are your friends for good or for bad. So don't you think sometimes that when we were in nursery things were pretty cool, when we were in class five things were okay but now in this grade you feel that she is interested in stuff that I should not be doing. It happens to all of us, our family values don't encourage us to do certain things that other girls are doing so how do you handle that situation? What do you do?

Slide 36-37:

Do you start dumping people?

Student: You slowly let go, you maintain your boundaries.

Teacher: Good answer.

Student: Try and tell them what's right.

Teacher: So what's the first thing you need to do? They are changing and you're changing, they're trying to pull you in and you go like, 'no this is not right' so do you just dump them?

Student: What if they are good friends and they do something that you don't. It's not like they're going to force you into it, they respect your values.

Teacher: See, there are certain things to see. You have set your own boundaries and let's say you have a friend who doesn't cover her head and you've started covering your head, so step one you convince her that this is something she should be doing but if you dump her because she does not follow your advice, then that is outrageous. But if she is maintaining boyfriends and she is doing wrong stuff and she is into smoking and she goes to these mix parties where she has got boyfriends and she does all sorts of wrong stuff and she says, 'I respect you for what you are' then frankly speaking she and you don't have anything common. Anybody who has gone to that end then there is nothing left but if someone is not covering their head its fine. If she celebrates her birthday on the other hand your family does not allow such things and she respects that, she won't listen to music when you are around, she goes to this extent for you then if you're trying to maintain that balance while keeping your boundaries it's absolutely fine! You don't need to dump her, but if she is on the other end where she is smoking, dating, mix parties, drugs, alcohol, lying to parents, bunking classes... this is not right, that just won't do!

Slide 38:

Prophet (pbuh) said, A man is on the *deen* (way of life) of his friend, so each one should consider whom he makes his friend. [Abu Dawood]

There is a good logic behind it.

When you spend some time with a person you start talking like them. When we go to America we don't become Christians but our accent changes, why? Because we rub off on each other. This is the reason when all of us come to grade nine and ten there is some movement as far as friends are concerned. Your values at home reflect in your personality and that makes you realize that there is only this much that is common between her and me.

Look at these fingers you will say there is not much of a difference between them, there is a little difference so I can bear with her but what will happen if I extend these two lines with time they will go apart so a smart person will stop it there, eventually she and I will not have anything in common.

Dumping is a harsh word, you need to let them go slowly and be there for them. So you should be there but you need to protect your own *imaan* your own values. You will have to maintain a distance from such a person and remember you and your friends will drift apart in different directions, it should not upset you.

Your friend's personality will rub off on you in a very subtle manner and you will not even notice it. The first indication would be that you start justifying to yourself that, 'well I don't have a boyfriend but what's wrong in having a boyfriend?'

Slides 39-43

Now we must also understand that just as we are not perfect, you are not going to dump her for the first mistake she makes. You're going to forgive her and council her. Some girls just love talking behind your back sometimes they even talk behind your back without the intention of harming you or they get jealous because they can't see your success.

Ideally speaking if people are constantly mean to you something needs to be done about it but to a certain extent council them and forgive them. So there is a time to forgive your friends but then there is a time in everyone's life where you need to let go and move on. We need to learn the balancing act that will come with experience but it has to come quick because these friends can destroy you. But do not sweat on small stuff like I hate her because she wants to have pizza all the time. Values are more important. Not that "sometimes she is so annoying I can't stand her and teacher at Perceptions said you can dump them". No.

The time when you should seriously think of moving on is when they are negatively effecting your own values otherwise bear with them.

Slide 44:

A very harsh thing is when girls bully, they go about it a very subtle way. They do that by gossiping, backbiting, seclusion, name calling, rumors, ever shifting relationships or friendships. So is it time for you to move on?

Slide 45:

Not right away but if things don't improve then eventually, yes.

You need to move on but before that please try and confront her because you don't know what's going on in her mind, maybe there is some misunderstanding. You go up to her and say, 'Hey, I've heard you're saying stuff behind my back I'm not a bad girl is there something I did to upset you? Why are you doing this, is there a reason?' And she might come up with the weirdest reason and you'll be like, I'm so happy I talked to her.

Slide 46:

Someone else might have created a misunderstanding so always confront that person before moving on... always! And confronting a person requires a lot of guts, moving on is easy but confronting is difficult. You had been friends for three years then why all of a sudden this friction? Try and talk it out, try and convince her that you are a well wisher but if it doesn't work then just leave it.

Slide 47:

Step two, let go of it! If this doesn't work and you think she is constantly being mean then you need to move on, it's just not working.

Slide 48:

But what if *you* are the very thing we are talking about? *You* are spreading rumors; *you're* the one who is back biting *you're* the one who is insecure, then what do you do? What do you need to tell yourself?

Student: Look at your principles.

Teacher: Look at your principles and what do your principles tell you? That 'what goes around comes around' if you're mean to people, people will be mean to you. If you're going to be insecure and jealous then you're just asking for it.

Slide 49:

A very important *Hadith* that I'd like to quote to you, *RasoolAllah* (pbuh) said that all Muslims are like one body such as if one eye is sore the whole body feels the pain. [Bukhari].

If there is headache the whole body is in pain so if you're in a habit of bullying other girls you need to tell yourself that my principles are the centre of my life and you should just memorize this *Hadith* because if you remember this *hadith* there is no way you're going to think ill about another person no matter how much you dislike that person.

Slide 50:

Another thing I'd like to tell you, these crabs are very competitive and if you put a lot of crabs in a bucket none would come out of it. Why? Because the moment one would try and crawl up the other would pull it down.

Sometimes friends are like that, you're fine but the moment you see her getting better than you in studies or in sports or in social skills then we feel like pulling her down that's a very natural thing and we don't even realize it. The thing is that yes, it's very natural, you look around and you do compare clothes, abilities, widths.

Slide 51;

It's natural to compete and it's even natural to be jealous of a person but we must always remember that everything that is natural isn't always good. We can't justify certain things by saying, 'It's natural, everyone does that!' if everyone is doing one thing that does not justify your doing it too.

Slide 52:

In fact competing with friends is downright dangerous. Don't take me wrong, competing is a good thing in sports and stuff but as far as relationships are concerned it's a big 'no no'. You never compete in relationships, it shows your insecurity but what is the cure?

Slide 53:

If you identify this problem in you then the only cure of this problem is that you need to think 'win win'. What does 'win win' mean? That there is enough out there for the two of us, I want you to win and I want me to win

Slide 54:

and thinking 'win win' does not mean you let your friend walk all over you because that is a 'lose win' situation, that is also not a good idea.

Slide 55:

Now, I'm going to read this out to you and see if you can relate to this:

"I am the peacemaker with my friends and family, I always thought it was the easiest way out. I find myself not saying anything because I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, I never want to start an argument, I find myself tearing myself down. I am a door mat, everyone takes advantage of me. Everyone might be happy but if I'm not happy myself I will soon just burst."

If you can relate to this then you are basically a 'lose win' person. You prefer losing and letting the other person win this way you cannot maintain a good relationship with your friend. If you're

always willing to lose and letting the other person win you can't maintain a good relationship with your friend this way. You have to be a 'win win' person. I want you to win and I know there is enough for me to win as well.

Slide 56:

Now there are 101 ups and downs as far as friends are concerned and we just touched upon few basic important things. But we need to understand that no matter how challenging friendship is I'm sure you all will agree with me that friends are actually the chicken bits in the salad bowl, you look forward to it, when they come to your mind you go like wow! *Alhamdulillah*. So we have to take care of them and if you've got a good set of friends then it's just a blessing from Allah (swt), it's a blessing from Him, thank Him!

Slide 57:

'In your life, friends are like the pillars on your porch sometimes they hold you up and sometimes you lean on them, sometimes it's just enough to know they are standing by.'

And that is so true so if you feel that you have got a good set of friends or you know they will help you to stay on the right track, the one that will take you straight to Jannah, thank Allah (swt) day and night for this blessing and take good care of them.

Slide 58:

In the end lets have a look at all the friends mentioned by Allah (swt) in the Qur-an.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillah Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

References:

- <http://friendsinislam.org/>
- <http://www.sunniforum.com/forum/showthread.php?84448-Friends-in-Islam>
- <http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/Friendship.htm>
- "The 7 habits of highly effective teens", by Sean Covey