

## **MODULE 4**

**Class Title:** Friends- part (2<sup>nd</sup> 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

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:

Teacher: Do you remember what we were talking about last time?

Student: friends.

Teacher: friends, right! I told you that our conversation would cover four things:

Slide 2:

1. surviving ups and downs of friendship
2. the hype about being popular
3. making and being a friend
4. handling peer pressure

We kind of covered the first two points, the concept of being popular and surviving ups and downs of friendship. Here's a very quick recap:

Slide 3:

We talked about how we need to give space to our friends; we don't need to cling to them. If they are worth keeping they will stay.

Slides 4-5:

What do you need to have at the centre of your life? Your principles and definitely not your friends! All the relationships you have in your life will fall in their places.

Slide 6:

We also talked about how to maintain friendships and one very solid tip is to think win-win; have a win-win personality. What is a win-win attitude? The mental attitude that makes you feel

that there is enough success to go around and the success of your friends doesn't make you insecure.

Slide 7-8:

We spoke about the hype of popularity and the three types of bees: "queen bees" and "wannabes" and I actually came up with a third type, that is, "don't-wannabes".

Slide 9:

For Queen-bees, popularity means everything.

Slide 10:

"Wannabes" worship the queen bees because they want to be up there too, but they somehow never make it.

Slide 11:

"Don't-wannabes" are neither popular nor losers; they have their own personality and they think that "popularity" is over rated. They are comfortable in their own skin and are not mean; they are smart kids. What do you think is their centre of their lives? Principles.

Slide 12:

Now we are going to talk about making and being a friend.

Slide 13:

The thing is, for some, making a new friend is a piece of cake; it comes very naturally to them. It's a built-in thing and people will tell you that you've got that thing in you, you make friends very easily.

Slides 14-15:

But then there are other people who are very nice, they have a good personality but for them, making a friend is like pulling out a tooth. They are in trouble all the time, they don't fit in and they think they are being judged by the way they carry themselves, what they wear, how they talk etc. They are very conscious and they get this feeling that they are loners at school; they feel less than others. They just don't feel confident enough; these are the feelings that they usually have and these people sometimes become so lonely that they accept friends who are not good for them because they feel they don't have a choice. They hang around people who give them attention but don't make an effort themselves to find the right people, who would bring them up, rather than bringing them down; they end up having lousy friends. Why? Because they are basically shy, in-confident and they feel that going out and taking the initiative to make a friend is not their cup of tea.

Slide 16:

Then there is this drama that happens to all of us, that two girls together are fine but the moment they have a third person in their group it doesn't work. Not all the time, but if you're a threesome it causes a problem.

Slide 17:

We need to understand that everybody is trying to find a place; you, your friends, your colleagues, and people around you. We don't talk so openly about it but everybody is trying to find a place and we need to see if we are making the right effort in making the right friends.

Slide 18:

Now we are going to talk about some tips which have been very helpful to find good friends and to hang on to good people around you.

No1: be slow to judge people; at times we cut off ourselves from certain girls out there because we are too quick to judge them. For example, we see someone dressing in a way that we disapprove; you quickly pass a judgment that she's not your type. We need to give time to the girls around us, to find out what is good about them and if there is something that won't be good for you. There is no rush, you can take your time to assess people around you.

Slide 19:

I would like to quote this comment made by a teacher. She conducted a survey: 88% of students believe that they were judged solely on their physical appearance. That's a big number and there were a lot of them who felt that they were unjustly treated because of the language they spoke or the accent that they had or if they were part of an athletic team, how sporty they were, these were the criteria's on which these girls said that they judged other girls. Would you like to be judged on these things? The way you dress up or the way you talk; do you want people to approach you just because you dress up nicely? Mind you, we spoke about this last time; these are not things about you, these are things that you have. I would want someone to like me for who I am, rather than what I have. But unfortunately, most teenagers judge each other based on physical appearances.

Slide 20:

The other thing is that we need to get outside our comfort zones and get to know new people because that is very important. There is always more to a person than you think; strangers are basically friends waiting to happen. That is the only way you will find good friends, by getting to know them.

Slide 21:

No 2: make the effort first. Unfortunately, we have serious ego issues but what we don't realize is that being shy, under confident or arrogant is harmful for you only. You're not asking a guy to take you out; it's just a girl out there who is equally shy perhaps. So it's all fine if you approach first;

Slide 22:

There is a very interesting thing that I would like to quote here.

"Man must wait a long time with an open mouth for roast duck to fly in."

It's a Chinese saying.....

What does it mean? Is the duck really going to fly into your mouth! No. So if you're shy or arrogant about approaching people, then you're basically a person sitting there with your mouth open, waiting for the duck to fly in. It's not going to happen! Flies are going to fly into your mouth; you don't want flies as your friends do you? You need to take the first step and you need to keep trying, if at first u don't succeed. Don't shut yourself off by feeling sorry for yourself.

Slides 23 - 25:

No 3: win your friends' hearts; you have to focus on how to win their hearts. I'm going to give you a few tips that will help you to win their hearts. It's not something new, I'm sure you have heard of this umpteen times, but this comes as a reminder. You need to assess yourself whether you have these qualities?

- Being thoughtful is always good. You will always win your friends' hearts if you're thoughtful towards them.
- Loyal; you have to be loyal
- Admit your mistakes. Nobody is perfect, we all make mistakes; whenever you make a mistake go out and apologize.
- Keep promises. If you make a commitment, not just to a friend but any person around you, a colleagues, class fellows, anyone; if you gain the reputation of keeping promises, automatically you'll find good people appreciating you.
- listen a lot, see what the other has to say to you.

The things that don't help are what?

- Being rude. We think this is a cool thing; saying whatever I want to my friend. It really doesn't help. You wouldn't want a friend who is rude to you. You would prefer one who is sweet to you, who is thoughtful and caring, who is not disloyal.
- Being too proud to apologize. This rubs a friend on the wrong side also.

- Breaking promises
- Don't talk too much. As far as listening is concerned it is the greatest need of the heart; that is the foundation of all communication. Don't forget Allah (swt) has given us two ears and one mouth; so we need to listen more and speak less. I'm not saying you shouldn't talk but you should talk less.

Slide 26:

There is this very interesting saying: Everyone hears what you say, friends listen to what you say, and good friends listen to what you don't say.

They know you so well that just a facial expression would tell them what you're thinking. That's the quality of a good friend, that she knows you inside out. You don't have to spell things out for her. If you want to be a good friend to somebody, she should not have to tell you everything. Obviously some things she will have to tell you but for others, you will have to look at her face and figure out that she didn't have a good day. You should be able to tell if there is something bothering her; that's the kind of good friend that everyone wants.

Slide 27:

No 4: Make yourself likable. It is almost impossible to make people like you. There is a difference between forcing people to like you and making yourself likable.

Can anybody tell me what is the best way of making yourself likable? Why is that you can't force people to like you but you can make yourself likable? What's the difference? Yes you at the back?

Student: for example, good qualities that we have.

Teacher: in order to have good qualities, so that people would appreciate you, what do you need to get rid of?

Student: your weaknesses.

Teacher: yes, your weaknesses. You need to try and get rid of all the bad habits that you have got. That is the only way of making yourself likable.

Slide 28:

Let me give you a metaphorical situation: in drivers' education classes, drivers are constantly warned about blind spots. Do you see that the bike is at a blind spot for a car. There is no way that the driver would know that there is a bike in this corner, even if the driver would look into the rear or side view mirror. He will not be able to tell that it is in that corner and that is why it is called a blind corner. Likewise, in life we have our blind corners which only other people can see; you yourself can't see no matter how well you know yourself.

Slide 29:

For that you will need somebody to help you out; you can ask for help in identifying your blind spots and who do you think you're going to ask?

Student: friends.

Student: family.

Student: my girlfriends.

There is no one right person; if you feel that you have got sincere friends who are loyal to you then go ask them. At times it can be your mom or your siblings. They too are very close to you, they know you inside out; but for that you need to be able to listen to them and that requires a lot of courage. By the way it's just not asking, but accepting what they say as well; you need to step out of denial and understand what the other person is trying to tell you.

Simply ask "If you ever notice anything that might make it harder for me to make friends; would you please let me know about it. It only hurts a little but you will be glad to know about your blind spot which you wouldn't have known otherwise.

Slide 30:

So the question you should ask yourself is, are you someone you would like to be around? Observe the way you are with people around you; it is really helpful to take a look at yourself and identify the qualities you have that you would not want in your friends. I'm rude that's fine but my friends should not be rude; that should not be the attitude. It is not just about finding a good friend for you, it is about being a good friend too.

Slide 31:

Certain questions you should ask yourself are:

- Are you being told that you are too loud or that you just don't keep quiet? If yes, then you need to do something about it because there is a difference between being sweet, friendly and nice and talking too much. It bothers other people; it ticks them off if you're talking all the time and not listening to what they have to say.
- Do you ask your friends about their lives or is it always about you?
- Could you practice better hygiene, bathe more often and brush your teeth more frequently? People who are very close to you are the only ones who can tell you about your mouth hygiene, no one else can. You need to be very careful with your words because the idea is not to hurt anyone.

- Do you think you are better than everyone else? Do you always put yourself down with words like, what a loser you are? Both extremes are wrong; if you think you're better than everyone or you feel you're a loser among the others.

What is being identified here? One is identifying the queen bees and the other identifies the wannabes; if you want to be a don't-want-to-be-a-wannabe then you have to stick to your principles and accept the truth.

- Do you take yourself seriously or do you always have to be funny and make everything a joke? These again are two extremes; being over sensitive is not a good idea if you want to make friends. Also if you're always joking around and there is this girl who wants to speak her heart out to you, but you are always in a carefree mood then that is the other extreme.

Slide 32:

So when you're focusing on making yourself likable, then you need to focus on things that you can change and not on the things that are not in your hands.

So what are the things you can't control, can anybody tell me? Yes?

Student: looks.

Teacher: your looks. Yes, if someone doesn't like your looks, tough.

Student: your speech.

Teacher: What you say is important. If you don't have a cool accent, it's okay.

Slide 33:

The things that are out of your control are your height, features, general body type, your taste.

Slide 34:

Then the things you can control are your personal hygiene, fitness, mannerism, your dress. The centres of your life are your principals and then again how you carry yourself. This would include how you speak and what you say.

Slide 35:

Here is a very interesting *du'a* somebody made: May Allah (swt) grant me *sabr* to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Slide 36:

No 5. When it comes to being friends, be inclusive and let others in; this is very important for us girls. You need to have that win-win attitude; you need to understand that there is a lot out there to go around. If I have two friends and the third one wants to join in, that must not make me insecure. You may be enjoying the security of a close knit group of friends right now but there are always people on the outside wanting in.

Slide 37:

There is this very interesting quote by Emily Dickson. She says,

“They might not need me, but they might,  
I'll let my head be just in sight.  
A smile as small as mine, might be  
Precisely their necessity.”

Slide 38:

No 6: Treat Unkindness with kindness. How often do we say, 'oh why should I be nice to her she is so rude to me.'

Slide 39:

But we must know it is easy to be nice to people who are nice to you. The bigger challenge is to be nice to the mean.

Slide 40:

Do you know Abraham Lincoln was criticized because he used to try to make friends with his enemies instead of getting rid of them; do you know what justification he used to give? “Isn't that what I'm doing when I make an enemy a friend?”

Slide 41:

The seventh thing is we must always lift others. They must lift you and you must lift them because we need shoulders to cry on.

Slide 42:

If you need to see that you have a good set of friends then you need to ask yourself am I a better person around them? If yes, then you have a good set of friends; hang on to them but they should not be more important than the principles you have in your life. It is because of your principles that you have good friends.



Slide 43:

Your ultimate test is, am I a good friend or not? If you had to answer that, what would you say? Ask them. You need to know if people think you're a good friend.

Slide 44:

Michael Jordan used to lift the game; everyone used to play better when they were around him because he used to lift their spirits. We need to play that part in the lives of our friends so that when they are around us their spirits are lifted and they are encouraged to do good things in their lives.

Slide 45:

Do you know what the best approach is; I'll lift you, you lift me and we will ascend together.

Slide 46:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحِفْظِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

O my Lord! bestow wisdom on me, and join me with the righteous.”  
(Surah Ash Shu'ara 26: Verse 83)

Slide 47:

What kind of group do you want to belong with on the Day of Judgment is a choice for you in this world. What kind of friends should we make? Million dollar question!

Slide 48:

We all have two choices: either you keep friends who tear you down or you can have friends who can lift you up. There isn't any third option. As far as cousins are concerned I don't have a choice; I can't change them but for friends I can. You won't be questioned by Allah (swt) about your cousins because you haven't decided that, but as far as friends are concerned we will be questioned.

Slide 49:

Now coming to the famous issue: peer pressure. What is it? Is it something negative or positive? It's negative generally, so we are going to focus on it from a negative angle. We just talked about the positive peer pressure and we all know it's nice when your friends are encouraging you to do good things or you're encouraging them to do well.

Slide 50:

Peer pressure actually makes you do things that you wouldn't do when you're alone or when you're thinking clearly; it's like leaving your brains at home. Peer pressure is when you feel pressured by your own age group to act a certain way, which contradicts with the principles you have in your life. Or there is a conflict between what the people of your age group are telling you and what your principles are telling you.

Slide 51:

What is the biggest setback of peer pressure?

1. It makes you do stupid things; yes it does.
2. Number two, you do things without actually thinking about it; you lose your brains. You're more focused on how happy it will make people around you, of your own age.
3. You just don't want to disappoint anybody. If you were to ask anyone why they give in to peer pressure, they'll tell you that they don't want to disappoint their friends.
4. Number four, you feel pressured by your friends to act in a certain way
5. And you do things to be accepted. This is something very important; a lot of us cave in to peer pressure
6. Because we want to be socially accepted and this is one point in life where we should stand out, but we are just too ashamed.

Slide 52:

Allah (swt) says in the Qur-an:

وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلَوْا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie. (Surah Al An'am 6: Verse 116)

Slide 53:

As far as positive peer pressure is concerned it is something not too common, that is why we are talking about the negative aspect. It is when your friends expect good things from you  
Negative peer pressure is when your friends persuade you to do something you don't want to do.

Slide 54:

Common, silly things done under peer pressure are skipping school, going to mix parties, dating, lying, vandalizing, using foul language, dressing in a certain way that contradicts your principles. Deceiving parents, being non-serious at studies, rebelling, mocking teachers, being rude. If you have the inclination towards any of these then you are going through peer pressure.

Slide 55:

Professor Dumbledore in Harry Potter said, "It takes great courage to stand up to your enemies, but a great deal more to stand up to your friends." That is so true.

Slide 56:

To stand up to your friends you need a defense mechanism; it's not an easy task and you need to have weapons. I'll give you certain weapons:

Slide 57:

The first shield is to be prepared. Now I'm going to give you certain situations for which you need to be prepared.

Slide 58:

"My friends have started making fun of me because I've started to cover my head"; now you need to think that I'm not going to be rude, I'm not going to cry and I'm not going to change my mind. Do you think you will buckle under and not cover in front of them?

Slides 59-60:

"I'm pressurized by my friends to lie to my parents and go to a certain place I'm not allowed to". What do you think you're not going to do? You're not going to listen to them.

What are you going to do? Try to convince them the other way around because your parents wouldn't like it. What about you?

Student: I'm not going to lie to them and say that I'm busy

Teacher: that's right. Falling for it is a loser's attitude, I'm not the one who is wrong. So what are you supposed to do? Talk them out of it?

Student: not going to doubt myself.

Teacher: good! She said I'm not going to doubt myself. Even if they say you're a coward and all those sort of mean things, you're not going to give up. You should have clarity of mind and think that whatever you're doing is for yourself, for your own *akhirah*. If they are worth it, then they are going to improve while staying in your company, InshAllah.

Slide 61:

The second shield is having clear goals in life. It is always easy to handle peer pressure if your goals of life are very clear in your head.

If I die tomorrow, am I prepared for the *akhirah*? If not, then I need to set a goal for my life.

Slide 62:

This *Ayah* in the Qur-an can be a goal for many people; it says that friends will be opposed by each other, except for the righteous. For a certain period of time you need to work on your friends, but if they are not budging then you need to move on.

Slide 63:

The third shield: a strong support system.

Slide 64:

Surround yourself with friends and family members who inspire you to be good.

Slide 65:

Set goals for each other and hold each other accountable.

Slide 66:

Then get involved in extracurricular activities; they make great support structure.

Slides 67-68:

Keep yourself busy and you will not get into trouble. But you must make sure that you are busy in the right direction – not simply killing time. An empty mind is the Devil’s workshop – the more directionless and goal-less you are, the more you would want to be accepted by peers so you can hang out with them and be invited to do stuff with them, regardless of the “stuff” being good or bad.

Slide 69:

Four signs that should warn us that we need a new set of friends:

1. If you have to change your clothes, language or standards in order to keep your friends.  
If that is the situation then you need to do something about it.
2. If you’re doing things you don’t feel so good about later.
3. If you feel like you’re being used by somebody.
4. If your life feels out of control.

All these are signs that you need a new group of friends

Slides 70-72:

The reality is that no matter how well prepared you are, you will face peer pressure. It’s not a piece of cake; there will be times when you will not have time to think. But you must show

courage at that moment – not give in. And *inshaallah*, you will get your courage from your principles and the support system around.

Slide 73:

So we have basically talked about

- how to choose friends
- how to befriend them
- how to be a good friend.

Slide 74:

The things we need to remember are:

- being popular is over rated,
- identifying our personal blind spots are very important to become a pleasant person,
- choose friends that lift you
- be a true friend yourself and stand up to peer pressure there is no way of escaping peer pressure.

Slide 75:

The most important message of today and the two classes we had is, do anything but do not centre your life around your friends. If you don't have friends then follow the steps we discussed and you will have no problem, *inshaallah*.

If you have made some bad friend decisions in the past, don't beat yourself over them. Learn from them. You can make better decisions starting from now.

Slide 76:

On a wall in mother Teresa's home in Calcutta was this beautiful poem, this can be treated as a rule to live by when it comes to friends.

“The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow, do good anyway.

What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight, build anyway.

People really need help, but they may attack you if you help, help anyway.

You might do your best and get kicked in the teeth, give the world your best anyway.”

Slide 77:

So if you would ask me in one line what is the basic rule to being a good friend, I'd say you have to become a giver.

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

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

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References for Teacher:

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