

Friendship Building

Friendships do not just happen. Although one person may start a friendship, both partners will need to contribute to the building process. You can initiate a friendship by moving toward a prospective friend and starting a conversation. You will probably have very few friends if you wait for them to come to you.

Remember that initial relationships with others are generally a little awkward. Allow yourself some time to feel comfortable with the beginning of a friendship—the initial awkwardness is natural and will lessen as you get to know each other.

The following are some tips to help you get started making new friends:

Involvement

Be where other people are. You cannot make friends if you keep yourself away from situations where there are people. Involvement entails both **communication** and **listening**. Share feelings, opinions, activities and other ideas. Remember to let them know that you are interested in both the speaker's words and feelings!

Send friendly, outgoing signals to others

It helps both you and them loosen up. Try these suggestions from Dr. Arthur Wasamar, author of *Making Contact*, a system he calls SOFTEN.

SOFTEN breaks down this way:

- **SMILE:** It shows that you are friendly and would enjoy the other person's company.
- **OPEN YOUR POSTURE:** Uncross your arms and legs: you will look more relaxed that way.
- **FORWARD:** Lean toward the person, or move closer to show you are attentive to what he or she is saying.
- **TOUCH:** A hand on another's person's arm is a welcome gesture (make sure you do not touch too much, however).
- **EYE CONTACT:** This shows that you do not want to miss what is being said.
- **NOD:** A nod communicates that you understand what is being said and you are interested in keeping the conversation going.