

## **Making Friends at School**

Here we are again. That time of year when we realize that summers fly by way too fast and that heading back to the halls of education is right around the corner. For those of you going back to school, this a time filled with many different emotions. Some students express excitement about the beginning of school, yet others feel anxious or nervous. Starting at a new school or moving up into a new grade can be intimidating if you don't feel comfortable initiating new friendships.

Because the social aspect of school is such an important part of our educational experience, it is fair to say that feeling like you fit in and having friends at school is one of the most critical aspects.

Whether you are thinking about seeing old friends or making new friends, here are some things you can do to make getting to know people easier for you:

***Be Yourself.*** People will know if you are pretending to be someone other than your true self. That will make both them and you feel uncomfortable. Be true to who you are, and people will more likely be drawn to you.

***Show interest in the other person.*** If you show interest in the other person chances are great that you will have a successful conversation. Ask how they feel about school subjects, sports, music or what kinds of things they do on the weekends. By doing this you communicate that you like the other person. When someone knows you like them, they will become much more interested in you too.

***Remember that everyone is insecure.*** Just about all senior and junior high school students feel self-conscious. During conversations, most people are wondering what the other person is thinking about them. When you affirm the other and show interest in them, their insecurities are bound to diminish.

***Be aware of your own feelings.*** Pay attention to your own feelings of nervousness, intimidation, anxiety or insecurity. When you are aware of your own emotions, you can recognize how your feelings are getting in the way of the relationship.

***Not everyone will be able to be your friend.*** It will be helpful for you to realize that you simply will not click with everyone, and that everyone will not click with you. Understanding this reality can relieve a ton of pressure and allow you to be yourself.

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