

# Going for the Gold

## *To Make a Friend Be a Friend!*

By Allan Weisbard L.C.S.W.

### How to have a great conversation:

1. **Ask questions.** *Ask about their interests and challenges. Show interest and take the conversation deeper without being intrusive.*
2. **Listen and try not to judge.** *It doesn't mean you agree with everything they say, it means you are taking the time to understand what their needs and aspirations are.*
3. **Show interest with follow-up questions.** *Such as, "How did you arrive at that?"*
4. **Zip your lips.** *Consciously ignore your ego's desire to be in charge or right. When you correct someone they feel attacked and often become hostile or defensive.*
5. **Stay focused.** *Stop thinking about what you are going to say next.*
6. **Don't be too nosy.** *Ask about what's positive in their lives, then maybe about challenges. Don't give unsolicited advice—especially regarding family.*
7. **Don't gossip.** *If you do, they won't be inclined to trust you. Be kind.*
8. **Use open body language.** *Be aware of personal space needs, which vary from person to person.*
9. **Put away distractions.** *Don't check your cell phone during a conversation.*
10. **Reflect on your conversation.** *Afterwards ask yourself, "What went well?"*

### How to develop deeper relationships:

11. **Make time together a priority.** *This means you have to schedule it.*
12. **Be active together—go for coffee, exercise.** *Friends don't have to be alike in personality or life experiences, sharing activities creates common experiences.*
13. **Be willing to try new things.**
14. **Understand friendships may be situational and temporary.** *Life changes so try not to take rejection personally—it may have nothing to do with you.*
15. **Be patient and don't overdo it.** *Be aware of cues from the other person that they need more space.*
16. **Understand that many people are overwhelmed and busy.** *This includes social media connections. People can't be available 24/7.*
17. **Have fun together.** *Value your friends like the rare gems they are!*

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