

How to mend a friendship

All friendships go through some rough times. Generally people seem to know more about how to make friends than they do about how to mend a friendship. This means that if you are going to fix up a friendship you will have to do it- you can't rely on other people knowing how to do it.

Nix it or Fix it

The first thing to decide is whether to nix the friendship and leave it or fix it. Generally it is good to keep as many of your friendships as you can but there are always exceptions. Some friendships just wear out. Others are with people you thought you could be friends with but they end up wanting to control, tease, bully or intimidate you. Not everyone is designed to be your closest friend.

But! Before you just say, "why should I be the one to fix it?" think long and hard about what you want. Good friends aren't easy to come by and shouldn't be treated as expendable.

Forgive

One of the easiest ways to be forgiving towards your friends is to stop and consider how often people may have had to forgive you in order to stay friends with you. We all make mistakes and we all do things that have unintentionally upset or hurt someone else. When you forgive someone, the person who benefits most is – you.

Apologise

Making an apology can fix a friendship. If you feel you have hurt or upset someone even if you didn't mean to do it, apologise. An apology starts with "I" and does not include the word "but". Even if your apology doesn't fix the friendship you will feel better.

Be true to yourself

Don't let the meanness of others run your life. If you feel hurt or insulted by someone, you can either choose to act in mean ways towards that person or you can think about the sort of person you are and keep acting in the way you want to be. If you think you are a kind, caring, understanding, funny and trustworthy person keep being yourself.

When you need to change a friendship

If you have a friend who demands that you do everything that they say there may come a time when you want to change the relationship.

It is not a good idea to let other friends tell you who you can hang out with or what you should or shouldn't do.

Standing up for yourself and doing the things that you think are important is part of being true to yourself. This may come as a shock to your friend who is used to you agreeing with everything they say. At first they may threaten to end the friendship.

Even if they do end the friendship, you may want to ask yourself was it really much of a friendship if it relied on one person doing exactly what the other person other said.

Bullying

Finally don't be a bully and don't hang around with people think it is ok to bully others. Be kind to yourself by being friends with people who are prepared to see the best in other people- you'll have a happier life.

Andrew's most recent book is "*Unlocking Your Child's Genius*" (Finch, 2015).