6 Tips for Expanding Your Social Circles

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Whether you’re interested in advancing your career, or having a new group of friends to go out with, you need to learn—and perhaps master—the skill of making friends. In this article, I would like to share with you 6 tips that will help you expand your social circles.

1 – Connect With Connectors

A great way to expand your social circle is to connect to someone through whom you’ll meet many other people. Those “connectors” are the types of people who keep friends on Facebook by the thousands, host parties whenever they can, and always seem to be with a large group of people.

Oftentimes, these are very open people and are easier to connect with than you think. They might not have the time to invest in a deep friendship with you, but they love to get to know more interesting people to add to their circle.
2 – Meet New People Constantly

A great habit to have is to always be meeting people that you can add to your circles. In reality, not all the people you meet will become your friends and not all your current friends will be around forever. This is why I always say that if you’re not making new friends, you’re actually making fewer.

I recommend that you go to places where it’s easy and appropriate to walk up to anyone and introduce yourself. Ideally, you need to go to places where others are open to meeting new people as well. Examples might be trade shows, opening nights, galas, cultural or charitable events, seminars, and talks.

3 – Establish Yourself As a Giver of Value

When meeting lots of people, you have to “hook”. Nothing hooks better than having a giver attitude. First, listen really to what they say and imagine if you were them; see the world through their eyes. Second, be willing to share stories, contacts, or quick advice on what people are talking about.

When you meet new people, there are some psychological principles that determine whether or not they’ll want to meet you again. This works on an unconscious level. One of the most important principles is the giver/taker attitude. If they sense that you only care about yourself, connection isn’t going to happen.

You can portray a giver attitude in two ways. The first is about really listening to what they say, imagining the world through their eyes, and giving them your opinion on their stories and situations. The second way is to prove that you’re ready to share similar stories about what they’re talking about, or introduce them to someone who could help them.

4 – Commit to a Local Community

One of the fastest ways to boost your social life is to get involved in a community that has the type of people that you want as friends. This community should be in your local area and should hold social get-togethers once a month, or more.

What you do is find one that you like, maybe on meetup.com, and offer your help to the people who run it. They’ll most likely accept, even if they don’t need that much help; they’ll just be glad you’re interested. This works great because it makes you meet everyone, and because it establishes you as a giver of value.
5 – Reach Out to People On a Regular Basis

Staying in touch is vital if you want to keep your social circles alive. You need to follow up with the people you just met, and catch up with existing friends. The challenge here is that we tend to get distracted and forget about it, and regret later on. To solve this problem, you can create a weekly ritual, where you spend only one hour calling, texting, and messaging people. Just mark on your calendar a specific day and time, and do it every week. A great time to do it is Tuesday or Wednesday, as it gives you the opportunity to make plans with people for the weekend.

6 – Know the Kind of Friends You Want in Advance

Before you start investing more time on making friends, do a little planning. Try to figure out what kind of people you want to hang out with. List out a few qualities, character traits, or interests that you like, and don't hesitate to be a little more ambitious than usual. This is important because it allows your mind to quickly tell if a person you meet could be a great fit for you.

Here are some qualities you can start with: giver, interesting, fun, ambitious, honest, loyal, curious, and reliable. You can add others if you want, and you can also make a list of the activities you want to be doing with your future friends. These lists won't be definitive, but the clarity they bring will save you a lot of time and frustration. I also recommend that you invest a bit of time learning about friendship and how it works.

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Recognizing the Distinction Between Blame and Responsibility

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Do you believe that in a perfect world everything would go right every time? At the beginning that sounds pretty nice, especially if it is a radical change from your present circumstances. In our fantasies, things work out, we get the “yes”, and events go exactly as we planned. The problem is that certainty can get boring, so we tinker, we try new things, and we experiment. That’s when it happens:

Sometimes things go wrong.

What you do next is the thing that makes all the difference. Is it your common response to cast about for who messed up? That might seem practical: after all, until you know who made the mistake, you can’t fix it. Do you look for what went wrong? Not just people are involved; there are things and there are processes. Perhaps one of them is faulty. Who was in charge anyway? Maybe it was a failure of leadership or instruction or training—after all, the buck has to stop somewhere.

Before we head down these roads, we need to check one thing: What is our intent in this inquiry? Are we looking for someone to pin it on? Are we looking for something to “fix”? Are we looking for a leader to denounce?

These are the common motivators. In politics, business, and the social scene, a favorite pastime is finding fault. News television is full of talking heads who are assigning blame everywhere and rallying to replace those at fault. Unfortunately, their replacements become the next targets and the cycle continues.

Only a few are strong enough to accept blame and take responsibility when something goes south. Only a subset of those strong individuals manages to hang on to face their next scrutiny. But there are such persons and we can model ourselves after them. What do they do differently than those who run from the blame?

Before we go further, we need to get some definitions straight. What is blame, what is fault, and what is responsibility?
To be **responsible** is to be answerable or accountable. It means that we will be measured.

To be at **fault** is to be responsible for a failure or worse, a wrongful act.

Finally, to **blame** is not just to hold responsible but to find fault with.

### How to Approach Responsibility

There are ways to approach responsibility that work and ways that don’t. Let’s start with the latter. When our focus is on blame, it is all about finding someone to get. It turns focus away from what went wrong and how to keep it from going wrong again. It is judgmental and vindictive.

Blame is often used to divert attention away from ourselves. After all, we don’t want the blame—who ever wants to be “at fault”?

But the blame game shows a lack of understanding of what responsibility fundamentally is. Responsibility cannot be assigned after the fact even though many attempt to do so. Responsibility was always present, even if it was not acknowledged. When you start to realize this, you stop blaming others. You begin focusing on your own role, whether in action or in abdication.

This is a moment of clarity but some folks lose it immediately by making one critical error: they replace blaming others with blaming themselves. This turns into self-recrimination, self-judgment and self-hatred. Blaming yourself is not the same thing as taking responsibility: In fact, it is a way to avoid taking responsibility.

The focus of blame is to find fault. Its objective is judgmental to its core. Finding yourself guilty is not going to change anything, fix anything or improve anything. Taking responsibility, on the other hand, has a superior objective—it is all about accountability. It is an assignment, not a verdict. When something is assigned to us, we take care to manage it, protect it, and make it successful, so in circumstances where many go from blame to self-blame, can you see the superior path of focusing on assignment? Whatever happened is now a provider of new and useful information, rather than a distraction from your objectives like blame can be.

There is one other turn of a phrase we must be wary of. That phrase is “to hold responsible”. Yes, it has “responsible” in it, but don’t be fooled: the active word is “hold”. It’s just a stand-in for finding fault. Remember, responsibility just is, and it was, but it cannot be assigned after the fact. A better phrase to embrace is “to accept responsibility”. It is best if you do it in advance. It is painful if you have to do it after the fact but keep in mind that your acceptance didn’t bring your responsibility into existence, it was already present.

If responsibility is sounding like a serious matter, it is, but it isn’t a circus like blame and faultfinding. Take responsibility mindfully and stay away from blame. If you do, you will find that things calm down and get clearer. It feels better to be responsible than to merely endure the blame.