



**KA2 - Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices  
Strategic Partnerships for Schools only**

**“Be a Buddy not a Bully”**

## **THE 6 “*FRIENDS*” TEENS SHOULD AVOID**

Great friends are hard to find and important to keep.

*The problem is that when you are a teen this message is not always clear for you. There is so much emphasis on social groups that it's tough for teens to be themselves, both outside and inside these groups.*

It's important for teens to learn to seek out friends who contribute value to his life. These are people who earn his trust and by whom he wants to be trusted. These are the friends that last. They're faithful in tough times, they listen and respect you as you respect them. They share interests loftier than group acceptance. In fact, they circumvent the social cast system found in high school to build their own place in the world.

Here are some tips for avoiding low quality friendships that may create problems.

Let's talk about the ones you may want to consider dumping:

1. The “*it's all about me*” friend only considers themselves in every situation and gives no attention to others. While it's true that everyone is selfish at some point, it's important to know who is going to step up in life when you need them. The person who is only focused on themselves will not be there in time of need. Dump the “all about me” friend.

2. *The friend who is negative about everything.* This kid will suck the energy right out of you with his constant attention on misery. “Life sucks, my friends suck, my parents suck and school is awful.” Don't let yourself be pulled into this way of thinking.

It's defeating, not energizing. But, life is actually amazing. And it's also hard. And it's the combination of ups and downs that help us grow and gain confidence, and learn wisdom to make better decisions as we go. It's important to understand that

*The problem + the struggle for solutions = the victory.*

That's what life is about.

A negative person doesn't think this way and will not easily change his outlook. This person is not receptive to learning, only to blaming. Let's dump “Mr. or Ms. Negative.”

3. **The user** is the friend who uses you when it's convenient. When you are the only two people around, he uses you for company and as a sounding board. But let anyone else join the group and suddenly, this kid doesn't know you at all. Ignores you completely. Then, when you speak up to contribute to the conversation, the user shuts it down. He wants you to be invisible to the group. This individual is typically immature and insecure and his behaviors may be to help himself feel stronger, but he's not offering value to your life. There is no room in your life for a user. Dump that selfish, controlling kid.

4. **The hater** is the kid who hates everybody and everything. He believes everyone is out to get him including his parents, his friends and school. His attitude makes it impossible to connect with him and his outlook is contagious. Try to think about how much value someone like this brings to your life. How is it helpful to you to listen to this all the time? Can you really afford such draining influence? Dump the hater.

5. **The mean kid** is not a friend to anyone. This kid can be really cruel and downright mean. He gets his affirmation from tormenting others and expects his friends to back him up. He's the stereotypical bully of the worst kind. He is empowered by dictating the lives of others and having a posse to enforce his control. It's important that you teach your kid that this kid is NOT allowed to dictate his life. Dump mean kids... whether they are mean to you, or to someone else.

6. **The victim, a.k.a. "poor me" friend** is always looking for advice for their problems. While it may feel good to you to be able to help someone else, it can be destructive to feel your only value is to be a therapist to your peers. Ironically, when you have a need to talk to someone about your own problems, the victim friend won't have time for you. You aren't a therapist and shouldn't be. You need friends who carry their own weight, share core interests, and enjoy similar activities.

Consider your circle of friends and take note as to whether or not they fit into any of these categories. Think about the friends in your life that truly add value to your life and demonstrate character and integrity.

Out of all of them, you may not find more than one or two who display the qualities you'd like to have in friends. But it is important to your future and personal development to build healthy friendships with healthy people who have the ability to give and receive the things that matter, and brush away those things that don't.

*\*Source: Todd Kestin, Teen coach and mentor who specializes in helping teens and young adults foster healthy and meaningful life relationships and create a greater sense of meaning in their world.*