

How to Attract True Friends

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The subject this morning: "How to Attract True Friends," "How to Attract True Friends."

Let us first understand the meaning of true friendship. Then we will know how to act to attract those real friends. Ordinary friendship is wonderful. But that friendship between Souls based on Divine Love, Unconditioned Divine Love is Divine. And so, let us understand real friendship that we may live the life wherein we will attract those which will be true friends.

The Master has this to say: "True friendship unites two Souls so completely that they reflect the Unity of Spirit and its Divine Quality." It is most fitting, I think, at this time, to read perhaps, to read just a portion of the Master's poem on friendship. Because in that poem, I hope you'll read it all, I'll read portions of it, in that poem he shows what real friendship is. He says:

FRIENDSHIP1

From Whispers from Eternity

"Friendship is noble, fruitful, holy —

When two separate Souls march in difference

Yet in harmony, agreeing and disagreeing,

Glowing, glowingly improving diversely,

With one common longing, to find solace in true pleasure.

When ne'er the lover seeks

Self-comfort at the cost of the one beloved,

Then in that garden of selflessness,

Fragrant friendship perfectly flowers."

Friendship must be unconditioned – selfless – to be true friendship. And, finally,

"Ah, friendship!

Flowering, heaven-born plant!

Nurtured art thou in the soil of measureless love,

In the seeking of the soul-progress together

By two who would smooth the way each for the other.

And thou art watered by attentions of affection,

And the tender dews of inner and outer sweetness

Of the inmost selfless heart's devotion.

Ah, Friendship!

Where thy soul-born flowers fall —

There, on that sacred shrine of fragrance,

The Friend of all friends craves to come and to remain."

So for real friendship is based on that aspect of God, Divine Love, and, if we inculcate that in our relationship, that is true friendship. And, if we act as such, live as such, live the life that the Master lived, the matrix of which was Divine Love, then we will attract the right friends. If you live a life where unconditioned, where conditioned love rules, you will attract just those friends who are governed by uncon, by conditioned things, rather than the Unconditioned Love of God. So, the life we live, a Spiritual life we live, determines to a great extent whether we attract true friends or not.

To illustrate friendship, let us discuss first, just for a few moments, conditioned and unconditioned love. Conditioned love, we find in human love. It is apt to be love with possession – especially in family life. So friendship, based on conditioned love, is not lasting, like that based on Unconditioned Divine Love. Because human love, and if there is possession in it, finds its fruition in outward consciousness, and outward consciousness passes away, does it not? So, human love, which is the basis of such friendship, is not as great and far reaching as the Unconditional Divine Love.

As I have said, human consciousness passes away; it had a beginning it must die. Therefore, your friendship, based on the service of outward consciousness, its various phases in the physical realm, the mental realm, or the business realm, service in that realm will give friendship. But it will not be lasting, because it is based on outward human consciousness. To be lasting, it must be based, and the matrix of it must be, Divine Love, Unconditioned Divine Love, which not only lasts through this life – this is the one point, if you'll remember, you'll understand how to attract true friends – yet the real friends, because they're the ones that'll be with you, not only in this life, but in other lives.

So friendship based on Unconditional Divine Love is not limited to one life, as this life here, but carries over, because it is based on the Eternal Consciousness and Love of the Infinite Father. And there are many friends that you have – I will come to it shortly – which you had before, and which love has been carried over. And now, if you act in the right way, they will come to you, and you will find them. So remember, love, based on Unconditional Divine Love of God, carries over from one life to another, and those are the friends that you must build here, now, and also attract to you.

Master said, "True friendship is broad and inclusive, not selfish and possessive to a single individual." If you confine your love to a single individual, individual, and build your friendship on that, you are obstructing the growth of that Soul. But, if you lift that from personality worship into God's Love, instead of losing that person, you will secure them in the greatest security that we can have – the Divine Love of God. So those of you who are afraid of losing a friend, or the friendship of a friend, forget it. Give it to God. Lift that person up. See in that person God's Great Presence as Divine Love. You will not lose that friend. That friendship will grow into the greatest thing, because then it will be based on not the transient worldly consciousness, but on the Unconditional Eternal Love of God. And so, there's nothing to fear except to break the delusion, to get rid of the idea of possession, and God, who gave you even ordinary friends, will be with you more, and more greater, in a greater and greater degree, in that True Friendship based on Unconditional Love.

So, the best way to understand friendship is to understand the source of all things, the One Eternal Light from which all things have come. If you see and know that one reality, God's Eternal Light and Love, then that changes the heart. Then you will see in your friends that Unconditional Love of God, and realize that they are children of Him, just as you are. And then, your love will not be narrow and circumscribed, filled with possession. It'll be broad, filled with the Omniscience of God, His Great Consciousness, His Great Love. That is the kind of friendship that you must have. If you live that life with the friends you now have, you will attract true friends, because true friends, remember, have in their relationship with you the Matrix of the Unconditional Divine Love of God.

That's why the Master, the Guru, is the Greatest Friend, because his friendship with you is based on Unconditional Divine Love of God. He has no personal motive. No possession. His aim is to do for you the best he can to lift you the highest. And as friendship is based on mutual service, that's the greatest service he can do for you, is to lift you from delusion into the Great Light of God. You remember Sri Yukteswarji's words to the Master even, when he said, "God sent me to find you, and to offer my love to you, and to lead you back home to Him."

Isn't that the most wonderful thing? That's the greatest service. And remember, true friendship is based on that Uncircumscribed Love of God, Divine Love.

Now the great, a great opportunity to attract true friends is open to us by cultivating friends of past incarnations, friends of past incarnations. Why? Because they are tested and tried, and being friends of that type, their love was based on Unconditional Love of God, therefore, it carries over. So those friends are right here, the friends that you had before, of past incarnations. They are right ready to come to you. God sends them to inspire you from the distant, distant past, past with His Great Love. They are there, waiting for you, for you to once more enter into that true friendship.

So remember, if you are to attract true friends, those friends of past incarnations, which you can recognize in certain ways, as I will point out in a moment, are the best, because they're tested and tried. They've been through the fire. The thing is how to find them? They're right here near us. There are certain ways in which to recognize them and draw them to you.

As the Master says, I like to repeat his words once in awhile, "It is God, God who comes to you in the guise of a dear, noble friend, to inspire you." Why not? God is the Sole Doer. Our greatest friends are those in which the relationship is nearest to God. So they come, they come to inspire us, once more unite with them, that we may once again keep on our path back to God.

Now, the Master has said this: "God loves us so wonderfully, and silently, and," he says, "through the hearts of His devotees." So that's the thing. Base your friendship on that. Have those friends in which you feel God in them. Not friends in which the little petty things are always bobbing up, and breaking that wonderful relationship. Of course, we have to put up with it. But get out of it. Place your friendship on a sound basis of God's Divine Love.

I have a letter here, which I would like to read just part of it, from the Master about real friendship, when he says this. There evidently was a little trouble between us, a little, you know, these things come up between friends. What of it? You have to rise above it. So he says, "Now please, henceforth, make this solemn vow," and I think we all can do this, "not to be disturbed by these trifling things. Raise your souls above them; pity people who constantly delve in such things. Make a vow that our love will never be questioned by our heart."

You may disagree with your friends, but when it's founded on Divine Love the heart doesn't change, no matter what the friend does. You don't care, no matter what the friend, what people say to you, if you're a friend of a friend. That doesn't change your friendship, does it? If the friend falls down in the gutter, does that change the fact the he is your friend? No. So the Master says, "Make a vow that our love will never be questioned by our hearts, nor be disturbed by anything or anybody else. That is too sacred to be disturbed in this way. Friendship is of God, true friendship is of God, and it is so sacred, it should not be disturbed by any such petty things as go on between people as we look about us."

So remember the Master's words, "Be not be disturbed by petty things." Your love is based on something far greater, God's Great Love, His Eternal Presence.

Now about these friends from past incarnations; there are certain ways in which you can recognize them. That is, many people you meet daily, do you not? But you're not attracted to many, but, nevertheless, you have to learn to love them all, whether you like them or not; and that comes when you realize the one common Father, and that they are a ray of that One Light of God, just as much as you are. When you realize that, you can love them, whether they hate you or not. What do you care? The Master says, "People hate me. I don't retaliate, I just wait, send them love until they change." Isn't that wonderful? Why should we go down to their level? We should not.

So now, to the test of those friends of previous incarnations; now, if they are a true friend of a past incarnation, they will unconditionally come back to you in spite of misunderstanding. They won't throw you away and leave you. They will come back in spite of the greatest misunderstanding. Isn't that true friendship? You take two people who are united, their Souls are united, they have misunderstandings, but they always come back. They always come back, because their love is based on the Unconditional Love of God, which is All-forgiving. So that's one way you can recognize these friends of past incarnations; in spite of your differences, they will always come back for more. Remember that.

Now another way is this. They will have an unconditional regard for you, no matter what you do. No matter what you do, they will still feel for you. Now, to your enemy, you can do the greatest good,

they're still your enemies, and they hate you. The friends that you have, you can do the worst things. That doesn't change them. They're still the same. That's real friendship.

Now if you want to attract true friends, act like that. When people talk about your friends, you don't change; you won't change, if you're a real friend to them, because people talk all the time. But we must keep that steady relationship based on Divine Love. Then we will not change. So we can remember we can recognize these friends of past incarnations by remembering that. But when you do something, no matter what you do, their opinion doesn't change. They remain the same. Think of the Master's words, Sri Yukteswarji's words to the Master, "I have come, because God sent me to bring you back home." And another thing he said, he said, "If I fall," imagine it, the Great Sri Yukteswarji "If I fall, please, please lift my head once more into your lap and take me back home to God's Omnipresence." That's real friendship.

When a person is down, that's when they need your friendship, and real friends recognize that. So when you see the person you meet, and you see that quality in your friend, realize he is a friend of a previous existence.

And finally, another way we can recognize the, the friends of past incarnations is this – this is very important. When, after a short acquaintance, you always know how they're gonna act. You don't know whether they're going to jump this way, or that way, or this way; you know they're gonna jump that way. They're friends of past incarnations. You know what they're gonna do. You know that they're going to be true, and loyal, and that they will not betray your confidence.

Those were your friends of a long time ago perhaps. You always know after a short while how they're gonna act. But those in which you don't know how they're gonna jump, watch out! They're not perhaps friends of a previous life. But the real friends, you're sure, you're sure of them, no matter what comes up. And when people talk about you, they go to your friends, the one that you know how he's going to react – you will always be the same – he's your true friend. And that friendship, which you have with him, is based on God's Great Love.

And so, the truest way to attract friends, true friends, is to base that friendship on the Unconditional Love of God. Then everything merges into His Great Love. So great is His Compassion for us all, that no matter what the differences are between friends, it will be dissolved and resolved in that One Great Love of God. That's the wonderful part of friendship. But, if a friend does not have that in his heart, he cannot realize that, he cannot be your true friend. That's why, if you want to attract true friends, live the life, live the real life of true friendship. Live the life, as I have said, as the Master lived. And no matter who came to him, he gave them Love. But as he said, "You do not have to mix personally with them,

but you have to be ready at all times to lend a helping hand, but not to be too familiar.”

Now that brings in the question of familiarity, which is very important. That's a great danger – familiarity. “Familiarity breeds contempt” is sure, and a positive statement. We must preserve the dignity of the Soul. Now, if you have reached a certain stage of consciousness, you can mix, as Jesus did, with the publicans and sinners, and it didn't touch him. But until you reach that point, you must watch out for familiarity, because it's a law. Why it is, I don't know. But, if you become too familiar with people, then the familiarity breeds contempt. It's a natural law. If you keep the dignity of the Soul, and above all, if you have the Realization of God's Light and Consciousness, naturally, familiarity will not count at all. You can be familiar as you want. But, unless you have that, watch out – because the dignity of the Soul is lost. Keep that reserve. Keep that dignity, as you should want others to be to you.

You may not want them, as they say, in your living room all the time. That's all right. We have a right to our privacy. But, if there's any trouble, and they need help, be ready to give it to them. That's all that God demands of us. He does not demand that we take everybody into the front room. No. But he does demand that we recognize them as His children, and act accordingly, and be ready to help them.

Now true friends are different, because between true friends the realization of Divine Love is understood. And no matter how close the association, familiarity cannot breed contempt, because they see God in that other friend. So, if you want to attract true friends, live that life. Be to others, as the Master has been to us. Set that example. Then you cannot help but attract true friends.

And finally, I'd like to read in closing from another of the Master's letters, illustrating this wonderful condition of Divine Love and friendship. And if your friendship is based on that, both Souls are united in the one Great Soul of God. Then, then we are friends in the kingdom. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." 3 It is not of conditioned consciousness, he should have said, could have said. My kingdom is of Unconditioned Consciousness, Unconditioned Divine Love.

So, if you base your friendship on that Unconditioned, Divine Love of God, your friends will also be members of the Kingdom of God. "My kingdom is not of this world." My kingdom is of Spiritual Consciousness wherein the Matrix is Divine Love. And in our Colony and between individuals, there can be that relationship of Divine Love. The Matrix can be Divine Love. It is in the Colony, in spite of all our differences. When you look underneath, you will see that one cementing thing, the Great Matrix of

God's Love. That's why, that's why it will last, the Master's work will last, because it is based on Divine Love. And he said, "When I am gone..." someone said "What will we do, sir, when you're gone?" He said, "When I am gone, there's only one thing that'll take my place, and that is Love."

And so, in all SR work...SRF work, in the Colonies; it is based on the Divine Love which the Master exemplified. That's why our friendship is as it is. We have our differences. Everybody'll have differences. You cannot help that. But when you resolve those, underneath, you'll find that steady flow of God's Great Love.

So, base your friendship on that and it will be Eternal and Everlasting. And remember, there is no greater example than that given by the Master. "When I'm gone," what'll take my place? Love. Why? Because he gave that, and he now is one with the Great Love of God, in the Omniscience of His Presence, and he's just as near, nearer now, than when he was with us. Let us not forget that. He is nearer now than when he was with us in body. Such is the Power of God's Love.

Now, follow that example of the Master. Merge in that Divine Love of God in your meditation. Take it out in your life, and with your friends, give it to them. Your friendship will be right. You won't worry about attracting true friends, because only the true friends can stand that Great Subtle Consciousness of God's Love – so high is the vibration – you needn't worry. Nothing can stand against that. So base your friendship on that. Live the life. Be one as the Master did in living with God. You will attract true friends.

And in closing, just a word from one of his letters, and you will understand what real friendship is. If you have a friend you want to be real to them, remember this: "Many times you have been a great friend in need. You shall ever find me," says the Master, "when your highest need comes at the end of this drama of life."

When you reach the end of the trail, the greatest friend you can have is the one that'll be there waiting to lift you up into God's Presence, consciously. Such is the service the Master gives to those who are true to him, and are loyal. So the Master is the greatest friend.

So he says, "When you need me most, at the end of the trail, I'll be there. Keep faith steadily." So let us follow the Master. Live the life he did. Feel God's Presence in you. Feel His Divine Love. Give it to others. You won't have to worry about attracting true friends.

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by Paramahansa Yogananda

FRIENDSHIP

Is friendship the weaving of the red strings of two hearts?

Is it the blending of two minds into a spacious one-mind?

Is it the spouting of love founts together—

To strengthen the rush of love on droughty souls?

Is it the one rose grown 'twixt twin mind-branchlets

Of one compassionate stem?

Is it the one thinking in two bodies?

Or, is it like two strong stallions,

Disparate in color and mien,

Pulling the chariot of life together

To the single goal with one mind sight?

Is friendship founded on equalities or inequalities?

Is it built on diverse stones of differences?

Is friendship the unthinkingly agreeing,

The hand in hand, blind walking of two souls,

Foolishly rejoicing in their united folly,

Falling at last into pits of disillusionment?

Friendship is noble, fruitful, holy— When two separate souls march in difference

Yet in harmony, agreeing and disagreeing,

Glowingly improving diversely,
With one common longing to find solace in true pleasure.
When ne'er the lover seeks
Self-comfort at cost of the one beloved,
Then, in that garden of selflessness
Fragrant friendship perfectly flowers.

For friendship is a hybrid, born of two souls,
The blended fragrance of two unlike flowers Blown together in love's caressing breeze.
Friendship is born from the very core
Of secret, inexplicable likings.
Friendship is the fountain of true feelings.
Friendship grows in both likeness and difference.
Friendship sleeps or dies in familiarity,
And decays in lusts of narrow-eyed selves.
Friendship grows tall and sturdy In the soil of oneness in body, mind, and soul.
Demands, deceptions, sordid sense of possession,
Courtesy's lack, narrow self-love, suspicion,
These are cankers which eat at the heart of friendship.
Ah, friendship!
Flowering, heaven-born plant!
Nurtured art thou in the soil of measureless love,
In the seeking of soul-progress together
By two who would smooth the way each for the other.
And thou art watered by attentions of affection

And the tender dews of inner and outer sweetness
Of the inmost, selfless heart's devotion.

Ah, friendship!

Where thy soul-born flowers fall—

There, on that sacred shrine of fragrance,

The Friend of all friends craves to come and remain!

1 Complete poem at the end of the lecture.

2 Definition of obtunding: dulling

3 St. John 18:36