

The Art of Winning Friends

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Our subject this morning: "The Art of Winning Friends," "The Art of Winning Friends."

Well, there are friends and there are friends. Some friends, as you know, are concerned with outward living, business, friendships, ordinary friendships, and such things. And then there are those real friends which do not change with changing conditions. And when you come in their company, you feel a difference than that which you feel in ordinary friendship. We will come to that a little later as to the reasons for such things. But still, behind all friendship is the pull of God's Great Attractive Force, drawing all things back to Him. And that Force is Love. So, even, in the ordinary friendships, or the limited friendships, or the conditioned friendships, the pull is the same; the great pull of God's Attractive Force in the universe, and known as Love.

As all things have gone out from God, through the Great Creative Force, so all things are drawn back to Him, and will eventually go back into His Bosom. And so, the Force of Love, which is behind friendship, is the greatest Force in the universe. It is a Cosmic Force. And it is the effort of God to once more draw back unto Himself those things which have gone out from Him, through the law of duality – in which the positive and negative forces of the universe operate, through this dual living – and finally, through the law of relativity, this One Great Consciousness of God and its Force – Love – becomes many, many, many things. And the Power, which is pulling those things back, in an effort to once more come back into the One Eternal Presence of God, One Consciousness, is Love. And that's the Force behind all friendship, and especially behind true friendship. And that Great Pull of God's Love is found in all human relations – more especially in the friendship between human beings.

And so, do, so do not take friendship lightly. Friendship is of God. And true friendship is that friendship in which Divine Love is the matrix – the Great Divine Love of God. And so, you can see how important it is to treat friendship in the right way, because, remember, friendship is of God. And, if you are untrue to a friend, you are untrue to God. Let us not forget that. Let us be careful in judging our friends.

And so, friendship is God's Great Attractive Force shining through the eyes of your friends, and my friends, drawing them back, and all of us, to the Friend of friends. As I said in our prayer, the only true relative we have, which is God. But God is in the friends, and friendship is that Great Attractive Force. That's why true friendship is so wonderful, because in true friendship it is Unadulterated, Divine Love of God. And those of you who have true friends, and have felt it, you know what I am saying and referring to. Friendship is God.

That's why in our prayer what do we say? "Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God." That's an aspect of God. Just like the Father aspect; the Mother aspect; the Friend aspect is the most beautiful relationship. And the Beloved, of course, is also a wonderful relationship. All these relationships can be found in friendship, true friendship, the matrix of which is Divine Love.

Also, friendship is the call of the Unifying Love of God to remove the delusion which makes each one of us feel separated from the other, and from God. Realize that. Friendship is that pull of God's Love in an effort to unify us all, and with one another, and with God. That idea of separation is the worst sin, that's the original sin. Remove that, and you have God. Remove that with your friend, and you have the greatest friendship that ever existed – true friendship – because the idea of separation is the sin. And when you feel separated from God in your daily living, say within your Soul, God! God! God! Remember Master's poem, "God! God! God!" Say that! Get out of this separateness from God. Separation from Him is the greatest sin. Say that! And as you say, and feel, and want, you soon will be. That's Divine Love pulling you and pulling me.

And finally, as I have said, true friendship is an aspect of God. Realize that. You will never again treat lightly friendship, if you understand it's an aspect of God, just like the Father aspect and the Mother aspect. That was the aspect, that was the friendship, or the relationship with Master which I had – friend, friend, friend!

He used to say – he spoke about the Dodge brothers: "When one died, the other one died, too." Well, when he went I didn't die, but I felt like it for a little while. But then I remembered that friendship is based on Divine Love, not just human friendship. And div, Divine Love is something real, and tangible, and can never pass away. And he told me that. He said: "No matter where I am, forget me,

¹ [Autobiography of a Yogi](#), by Paramhansa Yogananda, First Release 1946, (available on the Internet), Chapter 37

but that Light which you see, that Divine Love, which you feel, is God Himself." So that's a relationship which I had with the Master, and which was so wonderful, because Divine Love never passes away.

And so, if you have a true friend, and feel in the heart of that friend Divine Love, it'll never pass away. And so, you can understand how important it is to watch and be careful, and have only the highest good for yourself, and your friends, those who are united with you in Divine Love.

To be false to a friend is one of the greatest sins. Don't forget it – because friendship is a part of God. Friendship is based on God's Great Love for you as His child. And that same Love is in your friend. Never be false to a friend. Let me read you Master's words concerning that, from his little book, The Master Said. "Possessions mean nothing to me," he said, "but friendship is very dear. In true companionship one catches a glimpse of the Friend of all friends. Never be false to a friend or betray anyone. To do so is one of the greatest sins before the divine tribunal."² (Sic) And so, we should realize that. And you will realize it when you feel God in your friend. That's the key. And then it's easy to carry out the law of friendship.

And so, the epitome of friendship is Divine Friendship, or true friendship, broad and inclusive. That friendship, which is limited to one or two, or a few, and excludes the other, is not true friendship. It is not Divine Friendship. But when you feel in everyone, irrespective of color, race, or creed, that same Divine Love, that blood flowing through them of God, God's Blood; then, your friendship will not be limited, and you will feel more Divine Love in those who are able to express more of God's Love. That's all. But you will never exclude anyone. You cannot. You cannot.

True friendship is based on the two commandments, of which we often speak. In Matthew: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength and with all thy power, and thy soul...and thy neighbor as thyself."³ (Sic) "On these two

² The Master Said, Self-Realization Fellowship, 1952, Page 25, "One evening as he sat talking with his spiritual family of monks and sisters, the Master said, "Possessions mean nothing to me now, but friendship is everything. In true friendship you can catch a glimpse of the Friend behind all friends. That is why you must never be false to a friend or betray anyone. To do so is one of the greatest sins before the tribunal of God."

³ Mark 12:30, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." And, Mark 12:31, "And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

commandments hang all the law and the prophets.⁴ And, therefore, you can see friendship; friendship depends on the understanding and the carrying out of these two commandments, because Love is the matrix of true friendship. Realize that.

Our Master said, once more cause he, because he says things so wonderfully well, I like to quote him. He says again in the little book, The Master Said: "It is limiting to be attached to just one, or only a few persons, excluding everyone else. Such a course inhibits the growth of universal sympathy. You should extend the boundaries of the kingdom of your affections. Scatter your love everywhere, to God in everything."⁵ (Sic)

As Master once said in his Preceptor⁶, "I want Thee God. I want Thee, O God. I want Thee, O God, that I may give to all." That should be our spirit in meditation. That should be our spirit in our daily activities, no matter what they are. We want God because we are of Him. His Blood is in each one of us. Why? Having Him we can give to all. If you do not have Him, you cannot give Him to anyone else. And so, let us realize the epitome of friendship is Divine Love. True friendship comes when the matrix between two people is Divine, Divine Love.

Now, we come to "The Art of Winning Friends." That seemed to be the subject this morning, "The Art of Winning Friends." Well, that depends on service, sympathy, and understanding. If you think that you are going to win friends by being unsympathetic, or by, by not being universally friendly with people, you are mistaken. You have to give friendship to receive friendship. And service is the greatest thing. Service is the greatest thing, because, if you are serving someone else, you are doing them some good. You are carrying out the Second Commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And the greatest way to serve your neighbor is what? To give him love; to give him true friendship. And so, "The Art of Winning Friends" is based on service and understanding.

⁴ Matthew 22:40, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

⁵ Op.cit. The Master Said, Page 25, "Cautioning two of the young disciples who were attached to each other and seldom mixed with others at the hermitage, the Master said: "It is bad to be attached to just one of a few individuals, excluding everyone else. This inhibits the growth of divine friendship. You must extend the boundaries of a growing kingdom of your love. Scatter your love everywhere to the God in everything."

⁶ The original SRF Lesson's were call "Preceptor's"

You must manifest more friendliness. You must feel for others. And when you begin to feel for others, you will have more friends, because you're serving them something they need. They need sympathy; they need understanding; and greatest of all, they need God's Love. And coupled with your regular meditation and contact with God, when you know Him, then you can give Him to your friends. And so, if you wanna win friends, remember these things: feel for them, serve them. Understand that. There must be mutual service – mutual service. Realize that.

Now, Master once wrote me a letter, which I'd like to read you at this time. This, to me, perhaps, is the greatest letter that he has written. Whenever I am oppressed, if you can call it that, by this worldly living, which we all find to be so, I get out his different letters, and he has never told me an untruth. Everything he has written to me has come true. And that's why his letters mean so much to me. That's why, this morning, I wanna read this letter on friendship, which he wrote to me on February 7, 1930 – a long time ago.

"What I feel about our friendship I spontaneously write. God, I care not for riches, nor for fame or pomp, but give me true friends. Even just one, if it be, through whom I may hold Thee, and whom I may trust and enjoy without as Thy image ever-reflected in the mirror of my love. A friend is he who feels my direct needs as his own. Who feels for me as he would feel for himself. Ah wavelets of true friendship, heaven-born, merge as Thy one ocean of vast love. In the sea of friendship, the meandering lost prodigal souls come back to their own one home."

Now there's a statement of true friendship. All the things I say this morning, if you remember this little point, which the Master wrote, and which I value so much, you'll never go astray on friendship. You will feel for others. You wanna win friends? *Feel* for them. Those who are your true friends, can you take their troubles as your own? If you can, you're serving them to the greatest extent.

Friendship must be mutual service. That's why Master wrote those things. He said, "When you need me most, at the end of the trail, you'll find me there." I did a little something for him, as best I could. But what he did for me cannot be compared to the little I did. Mutual friendship, mutual service, is the basis of true friendship. So let us realize that.

Now one word of caution is this. With your friends, watch familiarity. It is a law – familiarity breeds contempt. It is not that we want it that way; it is so. So, we have to avoid it.

There are certain exceptions to that rule. Some friends, the moment you are with them, you do not have to be on your guard, because probably, you are developed souls, or perhaps you knew those others in previous lives. Those are the reasons. But unless you feel and know that, watch familiarity. Keep a little dignity between you and your true friends. Keep a little dignity. Do not be too familiar. You are a child of God; so is your friend. There should be dignity between your relationship. And there will be, if you realize God is in your friend. His blood flows through your friend just like it does through you. Keep a little distance. Not snobbishness, but just a little distance and dignity to another child of God.

Master had something to say on that which I'd like to give you at this time. Again from The Master Said: "Choose your company carefully. Be cordial and sincere, but always maintain a little distance and reverence. Never be familiar with people. It is easy to make friends, but to keep friends you should follow this rule."⁷ (*Sic*)

And so, let us take the next phase of friendship, which is how to keep friends. Sometimes, if you have a nice disposition you can attract them. But don't forget, the Devil's on the other side, waiting to break it up. So, this next point is how to keep the friends which you have. First, you must sympathize with them. You must sympathize with them in their troubles, in their adversity; and you must rejoice with them when they succeed. That's the first thing we must do. Rejoice in the success of your friends, and sorrow with them in adversity. Otherwise, there is not mutual service and understanding.

Never be sarcastic to a friend. Never be sarcastic to a friend. That's the worst thing to break up friendship. And I know you can do it. I know I can do it, if I remember that God is in that friend, and that I want to please God. And, if I please God, I will please my friend, and vice versa. And so, let us realize that.

Also, another point is, do not unduly praise a friend, unless it is to help him or her. Do not do that. Do not praise them. Even, you do not have to say a word. Your friend knows, through his or her heart, that you are with him, and if he's a

⁷ Op.cit. The Master Said, "And the Master said, 'Choose your company carefully, and when you are with them mix sincerely, but always maintain a little distance and reverence. Never be too familiar with people. It is easy to make friends, but to keep friends you must follow this rule.'"

true friend he will never forsake you. Friendship is based on unconditional love. Unconditional love means that when things are going wrong, you are just the same. Isn't God just the same to us when things go wrong? Of course, we have to pay for karma, but He's always there waiting, loving us. So let us carry that out with our friends.

Do not agree with a friend when they are wrong. That's not right. Do not agree with a friend when they are wrong. Master would never agree with us when we were wrong, he would give it to us. But in so doing, he was our greatest friend.

And another, and final thing, do not, do not uphold the vices of a friend. Then you are not a true friend. You are an enemy. Do not uphold the wrongdoing of a friend. Do not sustain them in it, but still, always be their friend.

Finally, the greatest illustration of true friendship is the Guru-disciple relationship. Why? Because it's based on Unconditional Love. No matter what happens to the Guru, or the disciple; no matter how low the disciple falls; or how many his failures; the Guru is always there, and ready and willing, to lift him once more onto the lap of Omnipresence.

Those of you who have read the Master's book the Autobiography⁸ will remember when Sri Yukteswarji told Master, he says, "God sent me to take you home to Him." And then in another place he said, Sri Yukteswarji said to, to the Master, "If I should fall, lift my head on your lap once more, and lift me up again to God."⁹ (Sic) That's true friendship, isn't it? That's the greatest relationship on this mundane existence, the relationship between the Guru and the disciple, based on unconditional love. The Guru wants your highest good, that's all. There is nothing personal in the relationship, yet there is the greatest relationship, because it's in Divine Love. He wants your greatest good; he wants your highest good; and that's why he is your greatest friend on this earthly plain.

I remember, one time, I was being shown that point. Master called me up, and we started, and we ended at four o'clock in the morning. He began to discipline me. Why? Because he was my greatest friend. But I didn't think so for a while.

⁸ Op. cit. Autobiography of a Yogi

⁹ Ibid, Chapter 10, "Ordinary love is selfish, darkly rooted in desires and satisfactions. Divine love is without condition, without boundary, without change. The flux of the human heart is gone forever at the transfixing touch of pure love." He added humbly, "If ever you find me falling from a state of God-realization, please promise to put my head on your lap and help to bring me back to the Cosmic Beloved we both worship."

He told me things which I knew I hadn't done, and naturally I resented it. So would you. But he kept at it and he kept at it. "Yes, this is so." And I says, "No it isn't." And that went on for four hours, I think. Finally, I said to myself, I said, "The Guru is my greatest friend. There must be some reason for this." And I listened once more. He said, "Ah yes, you must do that." "Well," I said, "Sir, if you say so, I'll do it." That did it. From that moment the ego went out.

Now why was that so? Because the Guru, being my greatest friend, he had never told me an untruth, he'd shown me the Presence of God and such things. I should have realized the Guru must be followed – right or wrong. That's the lesson I learned. And the moment I said, "Yes sir," his attitude changed just like a child. He said, "You know I want you to be the best." I said, "Yes sir, I realize it now." That ended it, but then came freedom with it. And in the morning, several hours later, he called up. "How are you?" I said, "Fine." He said, "I didn't know, perhaps, I hurt you too much." He said, "You know, no one would dare to talk to you like that except me." I said, "That's right." But with that, the ego left me.

And so, that's what, why Guru-disciple relationship is the greatest, because it's based on unconditional love. If the Master hadn't loved me as he did, would he have dared to do that, to disrupt the friendship? But because he wanted my highest good, he did it. And I am so grateful, because I realized the final thing, the ego must not stand in the way. And so, the Guru-disciple relationship is most wonderful.

Be a friend to all. How can we do that? How can we do that except we realize that God's Blood flows in every one of His children, irrespective of color, race, or creed? It is God's Divine Love that's in them. That's His Blood. And that's in you, and that's in me. Jesus pointed this out. What did he say? Do good to those who persecute you.¹⁰ Do good to them. Love your enemies. Why? Because he knew they were all of one blood, one with God.

And our Master said this most wonderfully. It's hard to do, but he says, "When someone dislikes you, or hates you, give them love." He said, "I, when I find someone hates me, or dislikes me, I leave 'em alone, and give them love, and wait for them to change." How much better than, it is than being in trouble with people all the time – resentful, feeling some little thing done against you? What

¹⁰ Matthew 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

of it? Isn't it much better to feel God in everybody, no matter what they do to you than to resent it and have trouble? It's much better.

And so, the Great Ones point the same way. Give your love freely to all; be a friend to all. Isn't God a friend to us – all of us? "...his mercy endureth forever."¹¹ Whenever you turn your attention within to the Great Presence of God, there is His Light, there is His Love, waiting for you. And you have forgotten Him, and so have I; perhaps, for incarnations. But He hasn't forgotten us. That's the basis of true friendship – Divine Love.

And finally, the supreme relationship is with God. That's the supreme friendship. The Guru-disciple relationship is wonderful, but the relationship with God is heavenly. He is the only Guru. He is the only Guru. God, the Father. He's the Father of this family – of you, and of me, and all of our brothers and sisters. He's the One; He's the Father. He's the Friend of friends. He's the true Guru.

Master said this very thing in his same little book, The Master Said. It has a little bit to do with me, but I know you won't mind. I had nothin' to do with it. It says, some asked him, he says, "Master, Dr. Lewis was your first disciple in this country, wasn't he?" Paramhansaji said, 'Well, that's what they say.' Seeing that the questioner was a little taken aback, the Master added, 'I never say that people are my disciples. God is the Guru. They are His disciples.'¹²

So, each one of us has that supreme relationship with God. Greater than even the relationship of Guru-disciple, because He is the One Guru. He is the Father of each one of us. He is our only relation. He is the Friend of friends. It is that Divine Love, which is between you and your Father, that same Love is between you and your friends. Divine Love is the matrix of true friendship. If you want to win friends, if you wanna be a friend to all, first contact and know God through regular meditation. Having Him, remember Master's words: "I want Thee, O God, that I can give Thee to all."

¹¹ Psalm 136, 1-26, "...for his mercy endureth for ever."

¹² Op.cit. The Master Said, Page 6, "Master, Dr. Lewis was your first disciple in this country, wasn't he?" The Master answered, "That's what they say." Seeing that the questioner was a little bit taken aback, he added, "I never say that people are my disciples. God is the Guru. They are His disciples."