Everyone needs friends, and you probably have always had at least one. A friend is defined as a person you know well and have concern, trust and respect for. As you get older, some of your friendships will start to change, and some may grow deeper. You might also begin to know many more people, although not all of them will be your close friends. Chances are you will also start to spend more time with your friends, and maybe talk on the phone more. Changes in relationships are natural but not always easy.

Making and keeping friends can be tough if you are shy or unsure of yourself. The best way to make new friends is to be involved in activities at school, and in the community where there are other people your age. Another way to make friends is to be friendly and helpful to other people. Talk to people, get to know them and find out if you have something in common with them.

Peer pressure can play a major role in friendships. If someone is vulnerable to peer pressure, the relationship is not balanced. Remember that you have the right and duty to stand up for what you believe is right. Express yourself with your friends. You have the freedom to say “no” if you disagree. If you are scared of losing a friendship by standing up for what you believe is right, then you are not in a stable friendship. True friends listen to and respect each other's opinions.

Standing up for yourself may cause tension in a friendship, but it is OK as long as you have the skills to handle the situation. Remember to communicate your ideas while respecting your friend's opinion. By supporting each other, whether or not you agree, your friendship will be more stable.

Tips for keeping friends.

- Be supportive.
- Be encouraging.
- Do not tease or belittle.
- Cooperate.
- Compromise.
- Be considerate.
- Talk openly about disagreements.
- Apologize when you hurt them.