



The Ultimate Character Development System

**Building a Successful Future
One Student at a Time!!!**



DECEMBER 2010 - FRIENDSHIP

**Friendship means we care and share
with each other.**

**Friendship is a relationship we choose
based on mutual interest, fun, respect and trust.**

FRIENDSHIP: DECEMBER 2010

Dear Family,

This month we will concentrate on the character concept, "friendship." Therefore, our power-chat discussions and activities will aim to help children understand what friendship is (and isn't!) and how to be a reliable, trustworthy, helpful friend to others.

Friendship is crucial to children's normal social and emotional development. Through friendships, children learn how to share and compromise, give and take, assert themselves and listen, solve problems and think critically and so much more. Good friends can be some of our best teachers both in childhood and adulthood.

Research tells us that there are enormous benefits of friendship from better stress management to better overall health. Recently, a study revealed that friends may even curb eating out of boredom. Socializing, the researchers explain in the January 2010 addition of *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, becomes a substitute for unhealthy lifestyles. In particular, the study, along with some others, implies that meaningful relationships with friends can help to decrease sedentary behavior and increase active leisure activities such that friendships can promote or encourage an active lifestyle.

Friendship is an important word to bring up for December since it's a time when many different people around the world celebrate cultural and religious holidays. Many of our friends may celebrate different holidays from us-- or the same holidays differently from us. We encourage our students to be curious and open to learning about these differences and share their favorite things about their own holiday traditions with their friends.

Here are the Powerful definitions of friendship for this month:

Young students: We care and share with each other!

Older students/teens/adults: A relationship we choose based on mutual interest, fun, respect, and trust.

During the four weeks of December we will be discussing the following:

- (1) Week 1: What is friendship? What it means to be a good friend.
- (2) Week 2: How do we cope with conflict? Arguments, bullying, and empathy.
- (3) Week 3: When should I be loyal? Popularity, bullying, and risky behavior
- (4) Week 4: How do I understand differences? Prejudice, acceptance, holidays and traditions.

Upcoming Powerful Words

January: Vision

February: Fairness

March: Confidence

As always, one of the best ways to reinforce Powerful Words is by modeling strength of character ourselves. Show and share with your children how you can be a good friend to someone and how you ask to be treated within your friendships. Demonstrate conflict resolution as well as other friendship skills along with acceptance and understanding of differences.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best Martial Arts and personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,
Your Motivated and Dedicated Martial Arts Instructors



DEAR *Dr. Robyn*

DECEMBER 2010: FRIENDSHIP

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(Paraphrased from a coaching call; with permission)

Dear Dr. Robyn,

One of my children has lots of friends in school and the other one seems to have trouble making and keeping them. I'm really not sure what to do. My son tells me that the kids in school are just not "like" him and he doesn't really like being around them. Please, any advice would be super.

--Erin B, Montclair, NJ

Dear Erin,

It's hard for parents to see that one of their children isn't thriving socially. Social support and good friends offer a great deal of positive benefits that we want our children to enjoy. Far from being about "popularity," solid friendships are a healthy, satisfying part of childhood as well as adulthood.

So what should you do if one of your children seems to have trouble making and keeping friends in school?

(1) Provide opportunities for him to meet others out of the school environment: School can have pre-existing status groups that make it challenging to meet new friends. Help your child meet new people by finding out-of-school activities for him with people from different schools and areas. Summer programs are also a great time to help your child engage in out-of-school friendships.

(2) Have him sign up for school clubs: Even within the school environment, clubs that meet before or after school can give your child an opportunity to meet people from other groups who have mutual interest. Drama, jump rope, or homework clubs are some examples. When children and teens are away from their typical group, they are often more open to meeting new friends.

(3) Help strengthen your child's friendship skills: Some children have trouble making and keeping friends because their friendship skills are weak.

Some have trouble with conflict resolution and simply cut themselves off when friendships go through rocky spots. Others have trouble compromising or keeping their friends' private admissions confidential. Still others have difficulty meeting friends because they don't know how to approach new people or feel a lack of confidence. Once you address the problem, you can role play and work on the solution.

(4) Encourage him to invite someone over: Perhaps he was partnered with someone in math class or met someone in one of the clubs during school. In order to deepen that friendship, he'll need to spend some time with this new friend. Provide an easy opportunity by telling him that you have an extra ticket to go to a movie or a game and he can invite someone he knows from school.

(5) Encourage him to get online: Children who are shy or have trouble in person can start to socialize with schoolmates on Facebook or twitter. Sometimes shy children feel more confident when online. While this isn't the "solution" it can be a start to creating friendships.

Here's to your success!



To get more useful ideas, be sure to visit our blog for Powerful Parents!
Go to www.DrRobynSilverman.com

My Good Friends

Draw a picture of you and your friend doing something fun!

In this picture, we are: _____

3 Words that describe my good friend are:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Circle what is true for you

I show that I'm a good friend by:

Sharing Taking Turns Saying 'good job!' Playing fair with friends

Helping Screaming Asking questions Hugging Smiling

Making friends laugh Trying new things Listening Telling secrets

Cheering for my friends Saying sorry when I hurt a friend's feelings

The Impact of Friendship

"Great friends inspire us to reach for the stars but don't fault us when we fall short of the mark." --Dr. Robyn Silverman

Think of one to three friendships that have changed your life in some way. What was it about those friends that impacted your life so deeply? Are you better or worse off because of these relationships?

