

# MAKING FRIENDS

A GUIDE TO GETTING  
ALONG WITH PEOPLE



written and illustrated by

**ANDREW MATTHEWS**

author of the international bestseller 'Being Happy!'

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Andrew Matthews

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## PREFACE

**H**uman relationships are the source of most of life's pleasure and pain. This book shares some ideas and strategies which can give you more pleasure and less pain !

You may have had the occasional thought about an acquaintance . . .

"It's impossible not to argue with that person" or "I don't know how to talk to this woman!" There are options for dealing with these people that you may not have tried, and we'll take a look at these.

We always have choices in how we deal with others, but most of us lapse into familiar ruts and patterns.

You will know some people who seem to be able to talk to anybody. They meet someone in a restaurant and you automatically figure that they have been lifelong buddies. You say, "How long have you known each other?" and they say, "We've never met before."

These unique individuals are not born lucky – they simply use skills, they have a particular awareness, and it can be developed.

Certain things are no fun to do alone.

Have you ever tried having a party by yourself?

Things like watching movies, eating dinner, playing cards, driving to work, fixing problems, planning vacations – and going on them – things like moving house, making plans . . . and having parties, need company – the people you care about.

A joyous life is one filled with friendships. Imagine losing your job, or your money, or your fancy car . . . No doubt you'd survive. But losing your closest friends, is a different matter.

Our happiness hinges on attitude – our attitude toward ourselves, work, effort, goals, our response to failure, disappointment, pleasure, pain and the whole life puzzle. My first book, **Being Happy!** is about such things. I call it a gentle philosophy of life.

There is, however, a key variable in the happiness equation – OTHER PEOPLE.

This book is about THE OTHERS. Those "others" with whom we laugh, hurt, shout, swear, cry, try, work, play, plan, debate . . . those whom we love, trust, tolerate, blame, believe, and occasionally avoid.

That's why this book, **Making Friends**.

There are no simple formulae for making friends. Certainly it takes more than a healthy self-esteem and good table manners to earn the trust of others. There's a balance between give and take, between duty to

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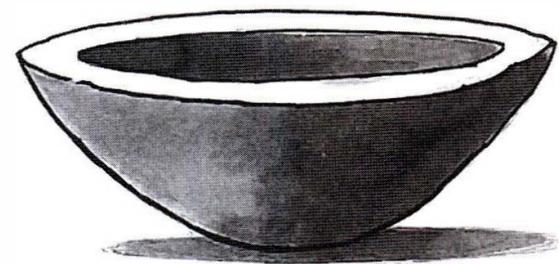
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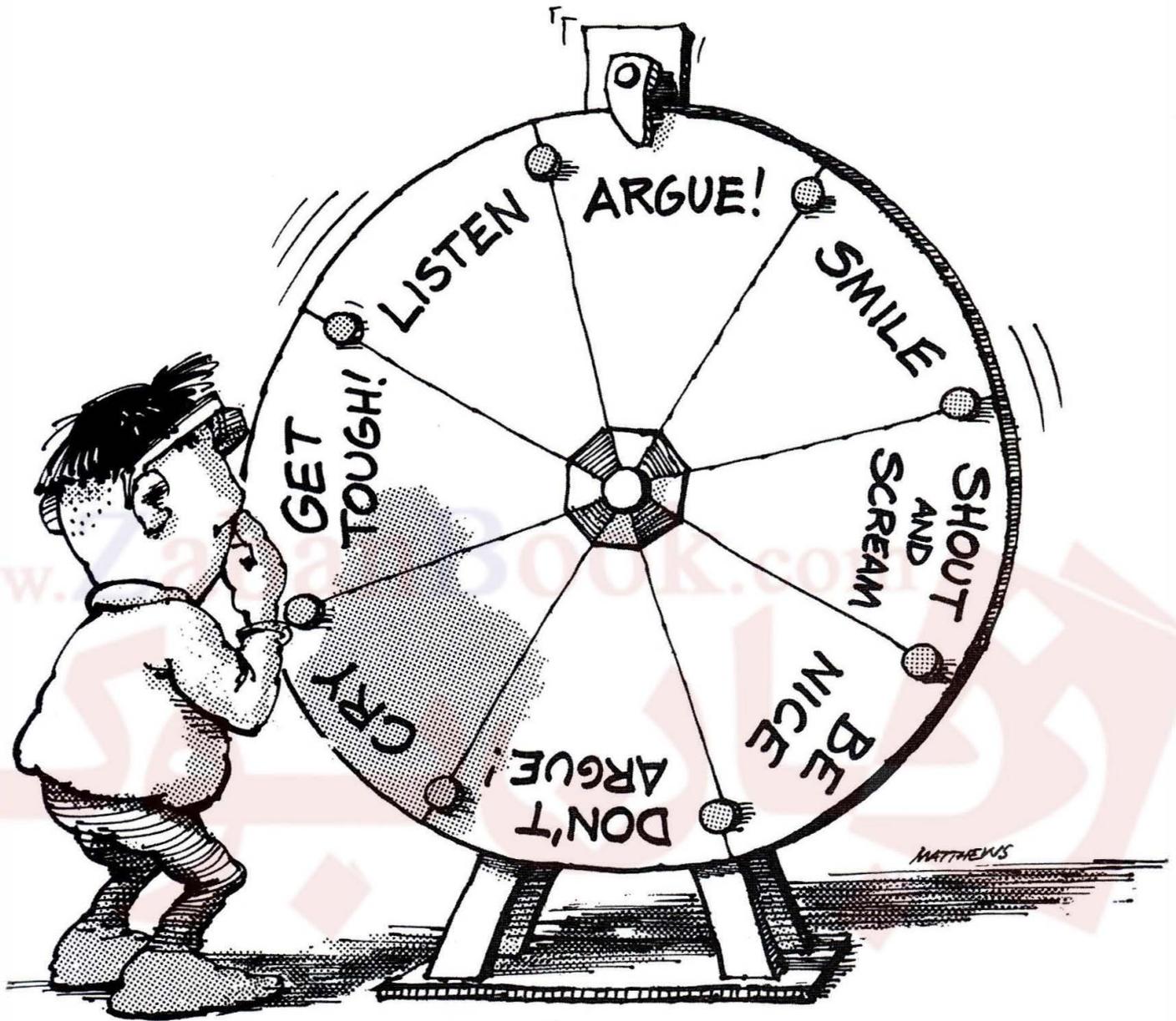
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## CHAPTER 1

# YOU AND OTHERS

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We All Get Nervous!

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Habits

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Comparing Ourselves

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Who Do You Think You Are

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Waiting For Someone ...

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Taking Ourselves Too Seriously

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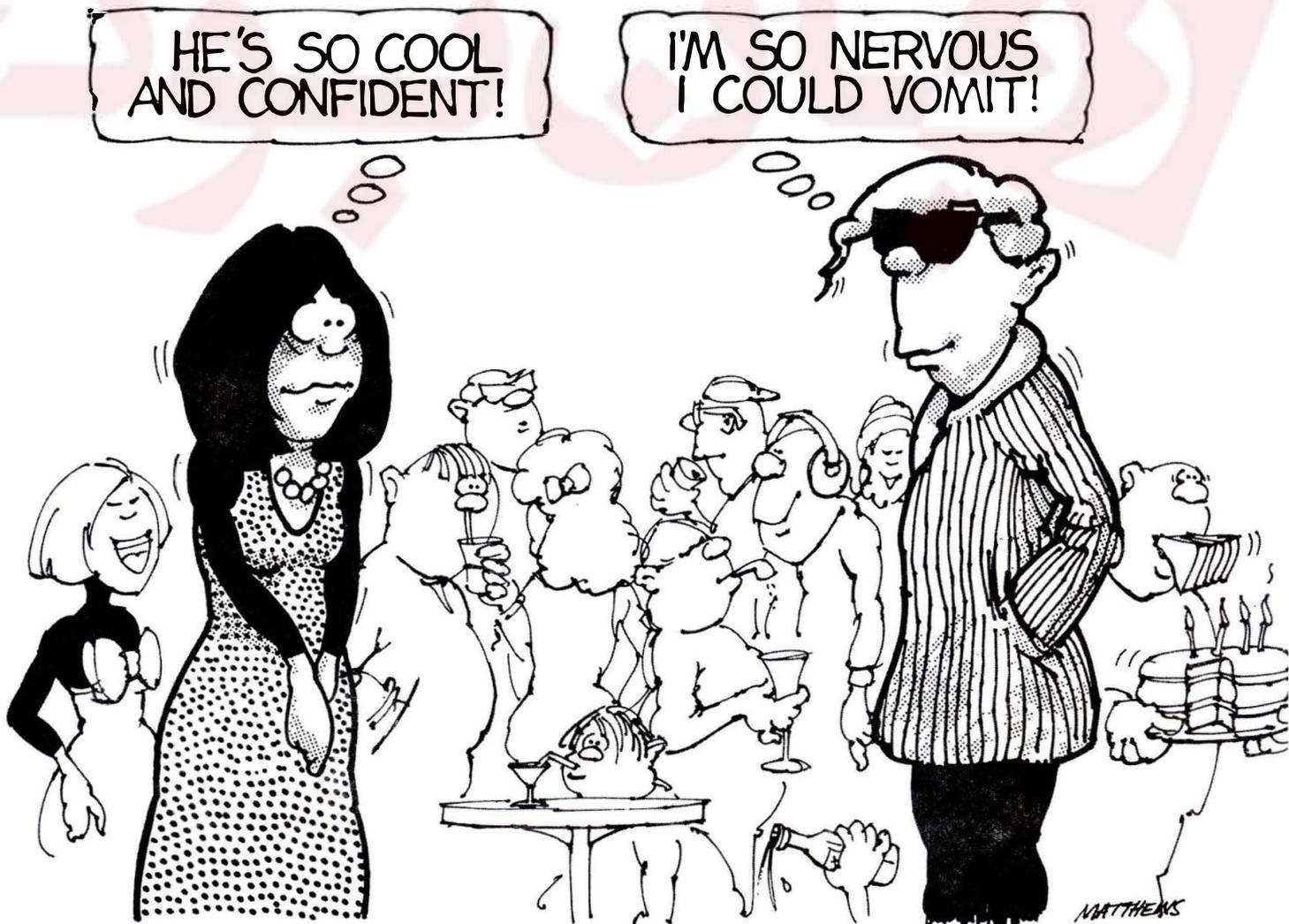
**It's no good being someone's "other half" – you're a whole person.**

## WE ALL GET NERVOUS!

**M**ost people are more scared than you are. Have you ever been scared of someone? If it is any consolation, many people who look cool, calm, collected and oozing with confidence are scared stiff.

You spot a glamorous lady sitting by herself at a party, casually sipping her martini. You think to yourself, "She looks very calm and self assured." But if you could read her thoughts you might be amazed... "Are people wondering why I'm by myself?... If I'm attractive, why don't I have a man?... My breasts are too small... I wish I was as smart as my sister... I want to go to the bathroom but everyone will look at me... If that guy comes over and talks to me, I'll die!..."

We look at the business tycoon and say, "He's got it made!" He looks at himself and worries about his paunch and his red nose, wonders why



he can't talk to his kids and agonizes about whether he's losing his touch, his hair and his money.

Isn't life a big joke? We look at others and figure that they have got it all together. They look at us and figure we have got it all together. We live in fear of other people who themselves live in fear of us.

For a number of years I conducted a seminar at the beginning of which participants were required to introduce themselves. At those seminars I would have doctors, teachers, grandmothers, models, sales-people, teenagers and business executives panicking and perspiring at the thought of having to speak for thirty seconds before a roomful of people. And the reason behind their fear – "OTHER PEOPLE MIGHT THINK I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH."

We should remember that everyone has "I'm not good enough" thoughts. Nobody has it all together.

Apart from anxiety, fearing each other leads to misunderstandings. You may have had the experience where you had some neighbors who never talked to you, so you didn't talk to them. You concluded that they were unfriendly snobs. Whenever you passed in the street, they'd be studying the clouds and you'd look at the cracks in the pavement.

Then finally after a year or two, you were introduced to each other and you became immediate friends. You were frightened to say "Hello", and figured THEY had a problem. They were scared to say "Hello", and reasoned that YOU had a problem.

Few people have the confidence they appear to have. You may look fairly harmless to yourself when you brush your teeth at the bathroom mirror, but don't be fooled. YOU'RE SCARY. You make lots of people nervous. So if you've spent sleepless nights in fear of others, give yourself permission to stop it. And whenever you are tempted to write off others as being opinionated and stuck up, give them the benefit of the doubt. Chances are they're scared.

## IN A NUTSHELL

Thoreau wrote, "Most people live lives of quiet desperation." We each have our insecurities. Refuse to live in fear of a bunch of people who may, like you, be quietly desperate!



## HABITS

**H**ave you ever noticed that when someone has an irritating habit, he or she is usually the last to know? It is the person with the foul mouth who has no idea that he is turning people off. It is the fellow who lives on garlic sausages who never finds out that he smells like one.

What does that suggest to us about our own irritating habits? We are usually the LAST to know.

I have a friend who talks and talks and talks. Having a conversation with her is like standing in front of a machine gun. She is very intelligent and highly educated, but she doesn't realize how she affects people. She is notorious for her one-way conversations. She has been told more than once of her problem, but somehow she has never absorbed the message. She is socially handicapped and doesn't know it.

We need to be aware of how we affect others, and be prepared to do something about it. An excuse like, "That's just the way I am" is an expensive way to live a life. If several people tell us that we talk too much or that we're always late or that we preach, or have bad manners, we can profit from that information. It is usually a sign that we have a problem.

One way to improve your self awareness is to talk to a friend you really trust. Find people whom you know will not deliberately berate you, and ask them, "How do I come across?" Let them know that you are interested in improving yourself and have them understand that you want their total honesty.



... ANYWAY, LET'S TALK  
SOME MORE ABOUT ME ...



Some questions you may like to start with –

"Do I talk too much?"

"Do I complain too much?"

"Do I drink too much?"

"Does my breath smell?"

"Is my language offensive?"

"Do I talk too much about my health, my partner, my insomnia, money, religion, jogging etc.

"How are my table manners?"

"Do I eat with my mouth open?"

"Am I ever boring?"

"Are there any clothes in my wardrobe that should be in the garbage?"

These are personal questions, but you've got to know! Whatever your friend tells you, don't take it as gospel, but give the ideas due consideration. Ask yourself, "Have other people ever told me the same thing?" Ask yourself "If I was living/working with me, how would I like it?"

It may be that you do offend other people and decide not to change. That is OK, so long as you know what is happening and what your behavior may be costing you.

Some people have the attitude, "I just have one problem – and it's with the five billion other people in the world. I'm perfect, but they don't understand me ..."

Ideally, others will be tolerant of your weaknesses, but you can't always count on it. While you may choose to exercise tolerance yourself, lots of people don't! Many an aspiring executive has been overlooked for a promotion because he dressed like a slob. Many a marriage has ended on the rocks because the wife talked incessantly or the husband never listened.

## IN A NUTSHELL

Outstanding individuals develop a special self awareness which endears them to others. To influence others positively, we need to develop that kind of awareness.

## COMPARING OURSELVES

"LEARNING TO LOVE YOURSELF IS THE GREATEST LOVE OF ALL."

**Y**ou have to love yourself before you can love anyone else. You have to believe that if you want to improve your lot. Books and seminars on personal growth also preach the same message.

WHEN WE ARE OVER CRITICAL OF OURSELVES, WE TEND TO RESENT PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING BETTER. Take Frank who is married to Jane. Frank is an upwardly mobile executive. Jane stays at home with the kids. She feels she leads a dull life while Frank is carving out a career. Result – Jane resents Frank. Day and night she criticizes the man whom she swore to love and cherish in sickness and in health. And the reason – Jane doesn't like herself, so she finds things wrong with Frank – and everyone else.

When others do well, Jane feels inadequate, so she gets critical. Her criticism really has nothing to do with Frank – it has to do with her own self-concept. Their relationship can never improve until she starts to like herself better.

IF WE SEE ONLY **OUR** FAULTS, WE EXPECT THAT OTHERS WILL SEE ONLY **OUR** FAULTS. Therefore, the unfortunate fact is, we're always waiting to be rejected . . .

Take Fred who believes he's a failure. He worries that his girlfriend, Mary, might also think he's a failure. He is very sensitive about not being



as successful as the neighbors. He knows he's overweight and suspects his nose is too big. Because Fred doesn't like himself, he feels self-conscious and second rate. He fears that Mary is on the lookout for someone better. He is easily offended and he nags her daily. Poor Fred can't forget his own problems for long enough to really care for Mary. Result – Mary feels unloved because Fred feels bad about himself. When our self-image is poor, our friends always suffer.

COMPARING OURSELVES IS A TRAP. There will always be people who are more talented, richer, smarter, wittier or more popular than we are. Parents and teachers and lovers may often say, "Why can't you be more like your brother?" The answer is, "Because I'm NOT my brother. If I were, I'd be exactly like him!"

At some point we each must decide, "I'm a unique individual. I don't have to be a carbon copy of my mother or my neighbor or anybody else." We can affirm, "I'm not perfect but I'm doing the best I can with the information available. I'm working at being a better person AND I accept myself for the moment."

We, like Jane and Fred, need to stop measuring ourselves against our friends or partners or the Joneses across the street. Instead, we begin to set ourselves goals and targets which make sense to us. We measure our growth this year in terms of our OWN progress last year, rather than

## GIVING

**M**ary gives Fred a \$500 present for his birthday. When Mary's birthday comes, Fred arrives with a bunch of daisies. Mary is stunned. She mutters, "What a cheapskate! I spent a week's paycheck on your birthday, and you give me pathetic flowers!"

Conventional attitudes might suggest that Fred has let Mary down, that there hasn't been a fair exchange. But giving is not a matter of EXCHANGING. When you give, you GIVE.



You give someone a present because you want him to have it. You give it because you want to give it. If you don't want to give anything, that's perfectly OK, too.

Where we get into trouble is when we "give" with strings attached. Mary's message on the card reads "Happy Birthday, Fred. I hope you like the stereo. All my love, Mary." The unwritten message is "My birthday is in August, Fred. If you don't spend at least as much on me, you're a cheap jerk and you can go find another girlfriend."

Problems arise when we give with conditions – "I want you to have this sweater. If you don't wear it twice a week, I'll be very offended." Trying to control people is always a frustrating business. If you give me a sweater, it should be because you're happy for me to do with it as I see fit. You'll stay much happier if you respect my decisions on what I do with it once it's mine.

Similarly, we may give to others in the form of sacrifice, giving up our time or our opportunities in favor of spouses, our children or our friends. Then we tell them, "I sacrificed for you!" to make sure they know about it so they can feel bad. "I gave up the best years of my life – I sacrificed my career."

Be adult about it. Make your choice. If you want to do it, do it. If you don't, don't. Leave out the sacrifice talk. Let the person be grateful – don't make him feel guilty.

As far as giving and receiving go, we basically get back what we give out in this world. Sometimes we receive from unexpected sources and don't receive from the "expected" ones. The only way to maintain peace of mind as a giver is to give without conditions. If Mary can give Fiancee Fred his stereo with the thought "I'm so happy to give you this stereo, so you may do with it as you please," she'll stay happy whatever Fred does – whether he listens to it daily, whether he gives it to his brother, whether Fred runs off and marries someone else.

When we're making a gift, we should aim to give without strings.

If we say, "Take this . . .

- a) provided you appreciate IT
- b) provided you appreciate ME
- c) provided you do with it what I want you to do with it
- d) provided I GET SOMETHING in return
- e) provided you feel guilty. . .

then we're not giving at all. We're EXCHANGING.

## IN A NUTSHELL

Giving without conditions may sound like "spiritual advice". It is also very practical, and it can eliminate a lot of resentment.

## JEALOUSY

**F**reud said that those who claim they are never jealous are deluding themselves. Most of us feel a little jealous from time to time – someone we care about gives their attention to our best friend, a colleague gets a promotion, and it hurts a little.



We may tend to believe that there is only so much love and affection to go round. Then, if mother shows some extra affection to our sister, we feel less worthy. We don't have to live like that.

If your mother adores your sister, it doesn't make you less wonderful. If your wife thinks your brother is cute or intelligent or entertaining, it doesn't mean she loves you less. There is plenty of room for lots of special people in the world.

## MAKING OTHERS HAPPY

**I**t is not your responsibility to MAKE others happy. Your challenge in life is to be true to yourself, to experience as much as you can, to treat others as you like to be treated, and above all, to ENJOY your life. Your job is not to FORCE people around you to be happy.

If your neighbor wants to be miserable, frustrated and gloomy, it is his perfect right to be so. Misery is a stage in the learning process of life. If a person chooses to be permanently depressed, let him be so.

Think back on your own life. You may remember times when you were depressed, and friends said to you, "Snap out of it! Life is great!" But you weren't ready to decide life was great, were you? Only when YOU

## WHAT IF PEOPLE COME FOR HELP?

Helping people when they have asked for help is a whole different matter to judging how others should live, and then setting out to change them. Helping those who are committed to progress is a joyous experience.

If you have found a way to make your life work, and someone says, "You are always happy – how do you do it?", share your ideas, give them your time, lend them your books. But marching out into the world and telling others to reform is a frustrating business and they'll resent you for it.

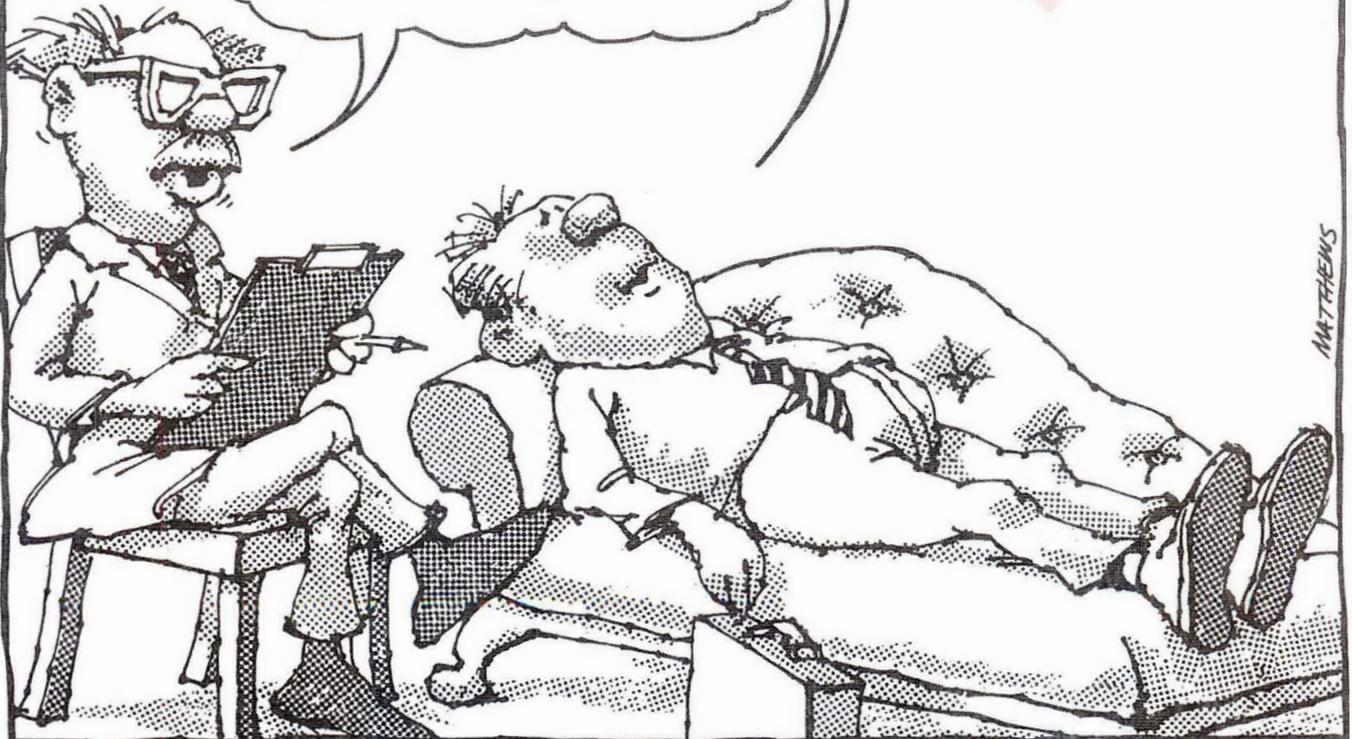


UNDERSTAND THAT SEVENTY PERCENT OF PEOPLE HAVE **MAJOR** PROBLEMS WITH THEIR PARTNERS!



WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER THIRTY PERCENT?

THEY'RE **SINGLE!**



When we are irritated by other people, there are two questions we might ask ourselves –

“Why don’t I focus on their good points?”

“What am I gaining by being irritated?”

We get irritated mostly because we want to be irritated. For every behavior, there is a “payoff”. The payoff in being irritated is that a) we get to be martyrs (I’M OK YOU’RE NOT), and b) we get to blame others (I’M NOT HAPPY AND IT’S YOUR FAULT).

The alternative to being terminally annoyed is to be FLEXIBLE. Bend a little and understand that everyone is different. People have different temperaments, different priorities. Some people shout and scream, and others never get excited, some show every emotion and others never open up, some are always late, some hoard their money and some spend it. Give them some space to be what they are. For the most part, respect others enough to allow them to experience life in their own way. BEND A LITTLE.

Being upset is OK, but it gets in the way of enjoying life. You can, if you choose, decide not to be upset. YOU DON’T PRACTICE TOLERANCE TO BE HOLIER. YOU DO IT TO BE HAPPIER!

## **IN A NUTSHELL**

Life is all about people. If we put too many conditions on how others should behave, we risk cutting ourselves off from life itself.

No doubt you have acquaintances who are less punctual, more thrifty, or less reliable than you, people who drink more or smoke less than you, people who are more talkative, less modest, much sillier or more serious than you are. BE FLEXIBLE. Delight in the differences in those who make up your world. Enjoy them for their uniqueness and you do yourself the most enormous favor.

## FROM ME TO YOU

**I**n Making Friends I have followed some major themes — “take responsibility for your own life ... practice tolerance — for everyone’s benefit ... emphasize the positive ... to get respect you have to give it ...”

We must be contributors rather than takers — if we want friends, we have to ADD to people’s lives. After all, isn’t that where the real joy is? ... in helping out, in surprising people, in doing that little extra ... sometimes it’s simply “being there.”

We must have fun and be fun.

Others also want us to be real. To be a friend we don’t need to become more complicated or sophisticated. Rather we peel off a few layers and reveal something of ourselves.

**T**here can be no last word on making friends. Daily, people will confound, confuse, frustrate and delight us, and we can never expect totally to figure them out. There are no formulas for friendship, but there are some rough paths we can follow.

May you find some benefit from the thoughts in this little book, and may you gather more than your share of joy, laughter and lasting friendships along your path.

## Acknowledgements

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*To Ian Ward of Media Masters. Your boundless energy and enthusiasm as a publisher are inspirations. Ian, you are really something else!*

*To Julie, my best friend. Thank you for the love and joy that you bring to my life each day.*

## This book is about ...

*Making Friends* is the natural sequel to Andrew Matthews' runaway international best-seller, *BEING HAPPY!* Simple, practical and very FUNNY, *Making Friends* is about the others ... those whom we love, those who help us and those who depend on us, those we want to see and those we avoid.

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## It is also about ...

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- enjoying people
- dealing with prophets of doom
- how to say No, sometimes
- prevailing over gossip, pettiness and anger

It is about understanding that IF YOU WANT FRIENDSHIP, YOU MUST BE A FRIEND FIRST.



## About the author.

Andrew Matthews' first book, *Being Happy!*, became a worldwide publishing phenomenon after its release in 1988. With *Making Friends*, his second book, he confirms the widely held belief that, for the man in the street, Matthews is an important bridge between the tranquillities of Eastern thinking and the practicalities of the West.

Andrew Matthews is based in Adelaide in South Australia

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