

arlene | rosenberg **Standing Strong**

Friendships: How We Make and Keep Them

We all know that we can choose our friends but we cannot choose our family. Unfortunately, many of us have had a difficult time relating to our families, which has made it hard for us to have close friendships. When those we love have habitually hurt us we begin to believe that all people we meet will harm us in the same manner. The hurtful memories stored in our subconscious keep us from respecting ourselves and hold us back in our relationships preventing us from opening and giving of ourselves to others. Typically we reinforce our bad memories by being drawn to the same types of people that hurt us in the first place.

The key to stopping this cycle is self-awareness about whom we are letting into our lives and the reasons for our choices. We are continuously drawn to what we know. If you grew up in a home where there was a great deal of anger, chances are there are many angry people surrounding you exhibiting similar behaviors to those experienced in childhood. Once you have this knowledge, you have the ability to choose and put different people in your life. I am always amazed at the number of people who put up with abusive and critical bosses. When I ask them who in their background was like their boss, most often it is one of their parents. If you look closely, you will see that your work environment frequently mirrors the way your family of origin functioned.

Making new friendships and being selective requires taking risks. Once you create a written vision for the types of people you want in your life, the Law of Attraction will put into motion a powerful energy force that will start drawing them towards you. At first you may find it very difficult to be with people who are going to treat you well. In fact, you will start to notice your discomfort with people who are accepting and supportive. This is where one needs to stretch and overcome their discomfort recognizing that the more they can let go and accept different treatment the happier they will be. Years ago, when I was working on this issue, I shared my discomfort with new friends and was amazed at how empathetic and supportive they were towards me. Ironically, once we can let go, we find ourselves becoming much more giving and thoughtful in our relationships and less critical.

Finally, good friendship is based on being able to express your feelings and needs to another person without their being critical or judgemental. The quicker you can share any discomfort you are feeling towards the way you are being treated and not let it escalate, the more intimate you can become. Friends who have difficulty being supportive, especially after you have discussed your needs with them, may not be the right people to continue having in your life. Recently, I employed someone to help me in my home who became critical of a close friend of mine. After several discussions in which I stated the need for them to be tolerant and stop the criticizing, I realized this was going to be impossible for this person. Although I was getting excellent service I made the decision to terminate the relationship. After I took this action, I never looked back because of the peace I felt in my home.

Without good friendships, we are missing a major piece of support in our lives. Trying to do it ourselves keeps us isolated and miserable. Follow the steps I have described above and you will find that you are happier, never feel alone, and more successful in your endeavors.