



RELATIONSHIPS

WORLD FRIENDSHIP DAY

Do you love your friends more than anything in the world? If you do, then on the 30th July you should be celebrating International Day of Friendship.

Although in some countries it's customary to exchange gifts between friends, the idea of World Friendship Day is to honour close friendships that have a positive impact on your life.

According to the Mayo Clinic, friendships can "enrich your life" and "improve your health" in many ways, including:

- Reducing depression
- Lowering blood pressure
- Increasing your sense of purpose and belonging
- Boosting happiness
- Reducing stress
- Encouraging physical activity through social sports
- Improving self-esteem
- Offering support during hard times or traumatic events, "such as divorce, serious illness, job loss or the death of a loved one."

It's important to develop and maintain healthy friendships – and to let your friends know that you care about them.

To help build and nurture friendships you may need to review your own behaviour. Remind yourself to:

- Show kindness and appreciation.
- Accept and extend invitations.
- Be a good listener and ask your friends about what's going on in their lives.
- Build trust by being open about your own circumstances and discussing concerns.
- Be available, not always cancelling arrangements, or coming up with excuses for not having time to meet, or chat (even if it's online).

You might also want to consider ways to extend your friendship circles, or meet new people by:

- calling or sending a message to someone you may have lost touch with,
- taking up a new interest or signing up for a workshop,
- and volunteering.

Remember to have good friends, is to be a good friend. Choose your friends wisely and make sure that when you're in their company, you feel happy, supported and understood.