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Do This to Make Friends

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It may surprise you to discover that there is nothing you can do to endear yourself to others more than opening up and being vulnerable. If you'll build more windows and fewer walls, you'll have more shoulder to shoulder friends. We all need at least one person to whom we can tell everything.

Windows, Not Walls

Not only will your self-disclosure draw others to you, it will create the kind of environment where they'll feel free to remove their masks. If you'll dare to take the initiative in self-revelation, other men will be more likely to reveal their secrets to you.

Jesus Did This

Jesus did this. He prayed with His disciples, walked with them, ate with them, resolved their arguments, and cried with them. The one thing most of would never do around another man, Jesus did. Why? So they could see his heart.

Gradually

Having said all of this about transparency, I'm not suggesting you suddenly tell a friend "everything" the first time you meet. Instead, I'd suggest you gradually pull back the layers allowing them to respond in kind. Friendships take time to develop. And they develop best with men who are continually getting past their fear of rejection and allowing others to see who they are behind the mask.

Not only do I want to be accepted, I want to be respected by my friends and my community. It's one thing to open up with a buddy about my struggles, but I don't want them announced on the evening news.

Two Sides of the Coin

There are two sides to this coin. On the one side, I want my secrets to be guarded by my friends. On the other side, I want others to know I can keep their secrets.

Few things demonstrate a deepening friendship like the sharing of secrets. As I mentioned above, as you share parts of yourself, your friends will tell you things which you could use to hurt them if you told others. Chances are, they'll wait to see how you handle what they've given you before they tell you anything more.

If you want to overcome your fear of exposure with a friend, share and see how he responds. If he maintains your confidence and tells you something about himself, then take another step.

It Stays in the Group

Every men's group I've ever been a part of has made it a fundamental rule that what's shared with the group goes no further. That means it isn't shared with our wives or other friends. It stays in the group. It's a good idea to never even let others know you're the recipient of someone else's secrets. That's not always so easy because we want people to know we're a trusted friend. The best way to be a trusted friend is to keep a confidence and not even let others know we're doing so.