



# Flourish with FRIENDS

GOOD FRIENDS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

Do you want to live longer? Spend time with friends! Researchers looked at 148 studies that focused on social relationships and longevity. They concluded that people with stronger social relationships had a 50 percent increased chance of survival. This finding held across age, gender, initial health status, cause of death, and length of follow-up period. Specific studies have shown that:

- Women with breast cancer who took part in a support group lived twice as long and had less pain as women who did not.
- People with successful friendships are less likely to have depression and immune problems.
- People with the least variety of social relationships were 4.2 times more likely to catch a cold. This was true even though being around others exposes people to more viruses.
- Having social support increases self-esteem and helps people cope with stress, grief, trauma, and relationship problems.

## BENEFIT FROM FRIENDSHIPS.

- Give and get emotional support.
- Relax and have fun doing things you enjoy together.
- Encourage each other to follow healthy lifestyle habits, such as being physically active and quitting tobacco use.
- Look forward to celebrating good times.
- Be comfortable to express wants, needs, and opinions without being judged.
- Feel a sense of purpose.
- Give and receive unconditional acceptance.

## BEING A GOOD FRIEND TAKES WORK.

- Communication is a two-way street. Discuss what's going on in your life. Listen to what's going on with your friend.
- Expect and give respect. Keep your friend's private issues private. Ask that he or she does the same.
- Focus on solving problems, not just complaining about them.
- Make time for each other no matter how busy you are.
- Offer help whether or not your friend asks you for it.

### Action Step

Call, text, email, or write a note to a friend today. Let your friend know how much he or she means to you.