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## WENDY L. MOSS, PHD

Magination Press • Washington, DC
American Psychological Association

# This book is dedicated to my special friends-Cindy, Donald, Marilyn, Penny, and Vicky. I have loved going through the journey of the decades alongside each of you!-WLM 

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Book design by Rachel Ross
Printed by Phoenix Color, Hagerstown, MD
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Moss, Wendy (Wendy L.), author.
Title: The friendship book / Wendy L. Moss, PhD.
Description: Washington, DC : Magination Press, [2021] | Summary: "Figure out what you want out of your friendships, how to be a good friend, how to resolve conflicts, and much more"-Provided by publisher.
Identifiers: LCCN 2020025378 (print) | LCCN 2020025379 (ebook) | ISBN 9781433832291 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781433834677 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Friendship in children—Juvenile literature. | Friendship— Juvenile literature.
Classification: LCC BF723.F68 M67 2021 (print) | LCC BF723.F68 (ebook) | DDC 177/.62-dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020025378
LC ebook record available at https://lcen.loc.gov/2020025379
Manufactured in the United States of America
10987654321

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## WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN A GOOD FRIEND?

Many different factors contribute to having close friendships, and there are many different things you can do to maintain them. That's what this book is all about: making friends, keeping friends, and being a good friend to others.

Friendships can help you to feel accepted, allow you to share experiences, give you reasons to laugh and smile, and help you to feel connected. Friends can also be an important support system when you need to rely on people you can trust. Some people make friends easily, while others sometimes struggle. Even if you are an interesting, kind, friendly person, you may still find that you want more friends than you currently have.

In this book, you will read about the definition of a friend, how you can make sure that you are ready to be a good friend, and the potential joys and complications of having a best friend. In addition, you will have an opportunity to think about times when you may want to be alone; ways to compromise, survive disagreements, and navigate the challenges of friendships; and the pros and cons of socializing over social media.

Throughout this book, you will get the chance to read about how other kids have made and kept friends. However, in order to protect the privacy of specific children, these examples are summaries of many different children's stories. They are not meant to describe situations faced by one specific person.

On your journey toward knowing how to make and keep friends, take time to think about what makes you special and what you like about yourself. If you take pride in how you act, the things you do, or the talents you have, compliment yourself! As you start making new friends, consider what you want your friends to appreciate in you. Then think about what you value in a friendship and how you can be a good friend to someone else.

Best of luck in finding, keeping, and enjoying your friendships!

SEEKING FRIENDS

## HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT WHY YOU WANT

 to have friends? Do you know what you want out of a friendship? Lots of kids may imagine that a good friend will have the same interests as them or think just like them. They may want friends who have a similar sense of humor and will want to spend a lot of time with them. Other kids might find that it's fun to have friends who are different from themselves. They may want to seek out new and exciting experiences with friends who are more adventurous, more popular, or more knowledgeable about certain topics. Many kids seek friends who can be trusted, who they can confide in, and with whom they can share private thoughts.Spending time with good friends can be a wonderful experience, but there might be times when you prefer to be alone, or even times in your life when you're not that interested in making friends. You may (or may not) be surprised to learn that it's normal to prefer being by yourself sometimes. When you're alone, you can sing, dance, read your favorite books, or do other activities just because you feel like it. You don't have to worry about what another person wants to do. When you're ready to be social again, you can reach out to your friends. It's important to nurture your friendships and find a comfortable balance between alone time and friend time.

In this chapter, you will get the chance to think about what you may want from a friendship, how much of your free time you would like to spend with friends, and what kinds of things you might enjoy doing with others. You will also learn about the circles of people in your life. Before reading further, though, try taking the quiz on the next page. You can't fail it! It's just an opportunity to think about what you want in a friendship and how you react to other people.

## Quiz

1. You don't have much in common with the popular kids in your grade, but you want to be popular, too. So you:
a. pretend to be just like them to fit in and make more friends.
b. try to find one thing that you and one of these kids both enjoy and begin to hang out together doing this one activity.
C. decide that you should try to make friends with kids who you are more comfortable with, and with whom you share the same interests, whether they are popular or not.
2. You want to spend lots of time with friends. You think that it might be fun to be close friends with a certain kid in your grade, but you know that the person is very busy. Do you:
a. give up on that potential friendship because you only want a friend who can spend lots of time with you?
b. try to get together sometimes with this person, but don't think a close friendship is likely because you aren't spending time together or connecting on social media every day?
C. decide that you want to become friends, even if you can't spend lots of time together, and you look for other friends to fill the rest of your free time?
