

## “Friendship is the spice of life”

Although, it may take years to build a friendship, it can take just a minute to destroy it. Even more troubling, people are straying away from building or maintaining long-lasting relationships and friendships.

Reports indicate approximately 50% of marriages today are ending in divorce. There is also a very high probability that most of us will lose touch with old high school, college, or neighborhood friends.

We have all heard the saying “friendship is the spice of life”. Recently there have been some scientific studies to prove this saying may true after all. The portion of your brain that controls your emotions is called the “limbic” brain, which can be seen on a MRI. Every second spent with other people your limbic brain is tuning into them; being changed by their moods and changing theirs in return. For example, just think of the people who make you feel better simply by walking into a room and in return think of how you make people feel just by walking into a room.

Studies have also confirmed that isolation can hurt us; while the simple act of connecting with a person can heal us, the same as regular exercise and a healthy diet will. Mortality rates for people with strong supportive ties are **two to five** times lower than people with limited or no relationships. A person who feels a sense of belonging has a better chance of staying healthy than someone who is isolated and doesn't have a support system. Why does this happen? One suggested reason is

that having social support affects your immune system and the activity of your natural killer cells. Conversely, people with solid support systems have stronger, more resilient immune systems. This could be because friends and family members encourage each other to take care of themselves, persuade one another to change unhealthy lifestyles and help each other during illnesses and difficult times. People who are already successfully building and maintaining intimate relationships with their friends and/or their significant other know the benefits a good relationship can provide.

So here are a few tips to help maintain and build a lasting relationship/friendship:

1. be open to new people and new experiences they may bring
2. stay in touch as much as possible: send frequent emails or telephone at least once a week, make a lunch or movie "date" whenever possible
3. accept your friend: she/he became your friend for a reason, don't try to change them
4. keep your friendship/relationship honest: if she/he did or said something that you do not agree with, go to them in love, patience, kindness and talk it out until it's resolved.

**REMEMBER:** Friends contribute to our satisfaction with life, give us a sense of belonging, competence and peace. **TREAT THEM WELL!!!!**

