

Friend or frenemy?

THREE SIGNS THAT YOU NEED TO BREAK UP WITH A FRIEND ...

You don't need **enemies** when you have "frenemies" —friends who aren't good for you. Maybe you've been friends with someone for a couple of years, but things have changed and you don't get along with each other as well now. Or maybe you're starting to suspect that one of your friends might have a secret motive for the friendship? Is it time to break up with that frenemy? Here are some signs you should never ignore:

1 It's "all take and no give"

You have a friend who talks about herself all the time, but when you try to change the subject and talk about yourself, or your problems, she doesn't seem very interested. You get along well and she's a lot of fun, but you're starting to feel **uneasy** about the relationship. She's had problems with her boyfriend for weeks, and you've always helped her when she's needed you. She can be a bit **needy**, and she calls you at all times of the day. But when you're feeling upset, she's always too busy to talk!

2 Your friend always wants something

You've been friends with someone for a few months. He's a cool guy and he's a lot of fun, but you've noticed recently that he only gets in touch when he wants something for himself. For example, you work on Saturdays at the local sports center, so your friend always texts you if he thinks that you might have some **free passes** for the gym or the pool. Your mother has her own company that is really successful and you think he wants to try to get a good job there. He always wants to hang out at your house if she's there. You can't remember the last time he messaged you without asking a favor.

3 Your friend just wants to gossip

You met each other through a hobby, and you've been good friends since then. At first you thought that she was a really nice person, but things have been a bit strange between you for **a while**. You used to have a lot of things in common to talk about, but these days you usually just gossip a lot about the other people you know! You thought that she was **loyal** to you, but now you aren't sure you can trust her. Her constant gossiping feels childish and you would rather avoid her.

... AND THREE FRIENDS TO KEEP FOREVER!

1 The wise counselor

This friend always has the right advice for you. He isn't afraid to be honest with you, even if it might hurt.

2 The adventurer

This friend pushes you out of your comfort zone, but through her you've discovered a new side to yourself.

3 The friend-twin

This person has known you forever. You can't hide anything from him, but he'll always **forgive** you.



Step 1

- 1 Look at the picture. What do you think the relationship is between the people? How are they feeling?

Step 2

- 2 Read the Reading strategy. Then match these problems with the three "signs" in the text.

- 1 "I think my friend is using me to get things that he wants."
- 2 "My friend doesn't want to help me with my problems."
- 3 "My friend says bad things to me about other people."

Reading strategy

Matching information

In a matching exercise, the information in the text will not use exactly the same words as the information you have to find. It will be expressed in a different way, or you may have to just understand the general meaning.

- 3 For each of these people, write *friend* or *frenemy*, according to the text.

- 1 This person enjoys sharing his passions with me.
- 2 This person doesn't think my problems are serious.
- 3 This person isn't afraid to tell me what she really thinks.
- 4 This person doesn't mind if I get annoyed with her.
- 5 This person just wants to say bad things about the people we know.
- 6 This person always asks me for money.

- 4 Match the **highlighted** words from the text with the definitions a–h

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1 enemies | <input type="text"/> | 5 gossip | <input type="text"/> |
| 2 uneasy | <input type="text"/> | 6 a while | <input type="text"/> |
| 3 needy | <input type="text"/> | 7 loyal | <input type="text"/> |
| 4 free passes | <input type="text"/> | 8 forgive | <input type="text"/> |

- a people who are not confident and require lots of love and emotional support
- b a period of time
- c people who are against you or who try to hurt you
- d staying faithful to someone and supporting them
- e to stop feeling angry with somebody who has done something to harm, annoy, or upset you
- f someone who feels nervous, worried, or upset about something
- g informal talk or stories about other people's lives
- h entrance to something that does not cost anything

- 5 **Think critically!** Read the advice (a–c) and match it with the three problem friendships (1–3) in the text. Is it good advice? Why? / Why not?

- a Tell your friend that you aren't her psychotherapist! Look for new friends who care about you and what you are feeling.
- b Tell your friend that you don't enjoy talking about other people all the time. If she doesn't agree—it's time to break up!
- c Tell your friend that you've left your job and that your mother isn't in charge of hiring anymore. If he still wants to hang out with you, your suspicions were wrong!

- 6 **Pairwork** Ask and answer the questions.



What kind of friend are you?

Do you think it's OK to ...

- 1 ignore your phone when a friend is calling you?
- 2 talk about yourself and your problems when you're out with a friend?
- 3 invite a friend to an event because you don't want to go alone?
- 4 warn your friend not to try something new?
- 5 stop being friends or have arguments with friends because they disagree with you?
- 6 talk about one of your friends with another friend?
- 7 feel jealous about something your friend has or has done?
- 8 arrange to meet a friend and then cancel it because you find something better to do?

Step 3

- 7 Write a blog post about a problem with a friend (real or invented). Follow the prompts.

- 1 Say who the friend is and how long you have known him or her.
- 2 Say why you became friends.
- 3 Describe what your relationship is usually like.
- 4 Describe what the problem is now, and ask for help.

Write around 100 words.