

# Finding Your First God Buddy

*“Friendship ... is born at the moment when one man says to another “What! You too? I thought that no one but myself . . .”*

*– C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves*



Generally, men are pretty bad at making friends—at least with other guys. So how do we find that “right guy” to be our first God Buddy? This is an important, yet scary step for most of us.

As I explained in my earlier post, **Where Did All My Friends Go?**, as men get older, we often have fewer and fewer close male friendships. Yet, men crave intimacy in our friendships just as much as women. Intimacy for men is not the same as it for our female counterparts. Its a closeness that men that develop from having a tight bond formed when you realize “You too?!”.

But how do you start?

## **Find Commonality**

Friendship usually starts during a common experience or while pursuing a common cause. It's very natural to connect with other like-minded guys this way. While this aspect of male friendship might be viewed as shallow, it's just the reality of how most men connect. It's easy to find commonality doing side-by-side activities.

Kyle Ingham, founder and editor of The Distilled Man, an online channel that helps everyday guys become well-rounded gentlemen, shares a video about how small talk can become a pathway to genuine rapport. In the video, he explains that shared activities become the bridge to real friendships. Even if two men start out just as "football buddies" or "drinking buddies", there's no reason a deeper connection can't develop if both men share something in common.

So, think about your interests. What excites you? Music? Carpentry? Hiking? Spirituality? Exercise? Cars? Take a class. Join a club. Find a MeetUp activity you like. Go to a new church. It's nearly impossible to have an interest that NO ONE ELSE is into. When you're doing an activity you love, you're more likely to be yourself. You're in your element. You're more relaxed. Shared activities also take the pressure off about working at making friends...which ultimately makes it more likely to happen naturally.

## **Overcome the Fear**

Much of the anxiety that men feel about pursuing male friendships is rooted in the notion that the stakes are higher than they really are. This stems from the natural competition between the male species going back to the primal imprint from our Darwinistic caveman days when the only thing that mattered was (A) Am I strong enough to win a fight with you?, or (B) Am I the one who gets the attractive, fertile mate over the other

men in the tribe?

The key is overcoming this initial fear of competition and being comfortable in the “uncertain” zone of an early relationship, is the first step.

Once you simply have a conversation and show a bit of vulnerability without fear of being judged, you have taken the first huge step.

When we talk to other men, we often fear the initial interaction: “Will he be my friend or not? Will he accept me or not?” OK, this may not seem “manly” but we are all thinking it. In reality though, the other guy isn’t judging you. He’s probably feeling the same way and thinking about keeping up his end of the conversation without being self-critical himself.

## **Pursue Someone You Admire**

One of the best ways to make a new personal connection is to seek out someone you admire. It could be that you admire them professionally, as a father, as a husband, or just for being “a good dude”. You can start developing the relationship by saying “Hey, I’m really interested in finding out more about what you do and your background. Can I buy you some coffee sometime?” You might feel uneasy asking to connect in this manner but the best thing to do is just take the risk.

As my first GB, Bill Johnson wrote in the post **My “GB” Relationship**, the next step might simply be to introduce yourself to someone who “opens the door” by being a bit vulnerable. Of course, you should always lead with how you might help them so you do not come off as a “user” but one who is a “giver”. This kind of selflessness act will actually help you both in big ways. Think of it as making a goodwill deposit that will yield a return later since the other guy may return the favor and help you professionally or personally. They will actually appreciate your genuine interest in them.

## **Next Steps:**

Easier said than done but don't fear some initial hesitancy about asking to meet for coffee. (but that is a topic for a future post!). Then be open, honest, and confident with the other guy about "the why" you wanted to meet. He will respect you for asking.

Once you've established an initial connection, if it seems like there's some mutual "chemistry," you shouldn't be afraid to take things to the next level. What is the worst thing that can happen? He may just say no.

Since so many men recognize they could use more male friends, odds are that he will be open to your invitation. After all, you're just talking about two men just hanging out to get to know each other.

Once you get over the aforementioned fear of talking to other men, here are a few ways you can make connections that can turn into close friends later on.

## **Be More Likeable**

Dale Carnegie provides six ways to help people like you in his book, *How to Win Friends & Influence People*:

1. Become genuinely interested in other people.
2. Smile.
3. Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
4. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
5. Talk in terms of the others person's interests.
6. Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely.

## **Then Just Do It!**

Ultimately, the best way to get comfortable seeking out new

connections is to follow the Nike approach: Just Do It!

Find commonality. Overcome the fear of rejection. Pursue someone you admire. Take the risk. Be likeable.

Now go find your first God Buddy!

Please leave a comment below and let me know what you thought. Anything I missed? Any tips you want to share? Then, feel free to send this post to someone else who might find it helpful.