

Summary of the Traits of a GB Relationship

To conclude this series on the unique traits of a God Buddy relationship below is a brief summary of all the traits together. I'd ask that you reflect on which of the traits are helping you deepen your friendships and which need more of your attention.

As you learned in the prior post on Teachability, when men become disciples, we can become the men that God intended. So use this series to work on yourself so you can also help your God Buddy!

In my opening post with the **Introduction to Traits of a GB Relationship**, I explained some basic differences between male and female friendships.

- Male-male friendships tend to be more "tactical" or "transactional"
- Female-female friendships are more nurturing and based on emotions.
- Men are usually side-by-side while women are face-to-face.
- Women invest more time maintaining their friendships whereas men move to the next task quickly and don't feel the same need to stay in touch.
- Men are also less intimate and supportive of our friends than females.

But these differences don't mean friendships are not as

important to men as women. Our are just different because we men wear “masks” that hurt our relationships and have barriers that keep us from developing real close friendships. So we need God Buddies!



In the post on **Finding Commonality**, I suggested that to kick-start a friendship you need to find not just one commonality, or even two things in common. I suggested a third, very important commonality that adds the relational depth. The third creates my God Buddy version of the commonality formula, which looks like this:

*First Commonality + Second Commonality + Third Commonality
(Living according to God's standards) = God Buddy
Relationship*

This third commonality shares the common goal of learning to

be more like Jesus Christ.

After finding commonality, the next trait was **Developing Trust.**



GBs trust each other to catch them when they are falling in life.

Tom Eisenman, author of *The Accountable Man: Pursuing Integrity Through Trust and Friendship* says there are three stages to a maturing friendship:

1. Simply enjoying spending time with someone you like.
2. Deepening the relationship through trust.
3. Growing accountability.

GBs begin to trust each other and let each other know the condition of their heart by agreeing that everything said remains just between the two of you.

In the post on **Confidentiality**, I stated the most basic rules of any friendship is you must never break the confidence between you. Eisenman shares in *The Accountable Man* that absolute confidentiality is needed so that nothing gets shared

outside the relationship unless permission is given.

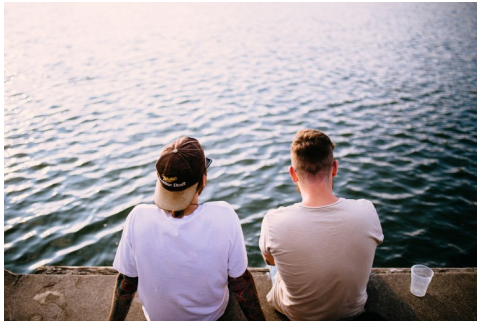
I also inserted a qualifier though that there is only one reason to break confidentiality: if you believe the safety of your friend, his family, or anyone else is in jeopardy. In that case, YOU MUST GET HELP from a pastor or the police if there is a threat of your friend harming himself or others. Of course, it takes great discretion to if private information should be shared if it is harmful. You must also never gossip.

The post on **Demonstrating Vulnerability, Authenticity, and Transparency** means you start talking about your weaknesses and sins to your God Buddy to begin the process of emotional and spiritual healing. I have another formula:

Vulnerability + Authenticity + Transparency = God Buddy Honesty.

Men shy away from Vulnerability, Authenticity, and Transparency for personal and cultural reasons but the concealment of our failures and weaknesses only sabotages our ability to grow and improve. You open yourself up to your GB by removing the mask and becoming accountable to God's standards.

The practice of **Good Listening and Show Empathy** is another much-needed trait since God Buddies should be great listeners.



GBs Listen Well

Empathetic and active listening is essential when your friend is in mourning or despair from a devastating loss or misfortune. You can help bear his burden by showing empathy and becoming part of his story. Just feel it and don't try to fix anything and just listen well. God gave us two ears and only one mouth for a reason!

Demonstrating **Non-judgmental Acceptance and Unconditional Love** simply means no judging. God loves all His people unconditionally; not based on our performance or merit. His love is completely undeserved and He loves us in spite of our disobedience, weakness, ongoing sins, and selfishness. Nothing we do can make God love us any more nor love us any less. In fact, God loves us so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross so we might have everlasting life (John 3:16).

While that is really Good News, we must also not equate unconditional love with unconditional acceptance. We must learn "Radical Acceptance", which means loving someone fully for who he really is – flaws, shortcomings, weaknesses, and all. It means loving without judgment but not the acceptance of ungodly behaviors.

At times then, you may need to use the difficult trait of **Confrontation, Confession, and Accountability**. As GBs go

deeper with each other, you may hear some hard truths about your blind-spots and sins that hurt. Gentle but firm confrontation, confession, and accountability means God Buddies speak the truth in love to each other and be accountable to God's standards and each other.

This comes through **Loyalty and Dependability**, which help your relationship flourish. Many people say they are loyal or dependable but their lives don't prove it. The loyalty of a God Buddy won't wain due to changing circumstances though. As American pastor and author, Stu Weber says: *"The ability to make and keep promises is central to manhood. It may be trite to say that a man's word is his bond, but it is never trite to see it in action."* Be a man that is loyal and dependable people to your GB.

As you move deeper in relationship with your GB, you will also need some **Patience and Kindness**. Jesus is our ultimate role model for these traits since He was patient with everyone (OK, maybe not the Pharisees!). Kindness does not mean overlooking sins but "God's kindness leads toward repentance" (Romans 2:4) so kindness from a God Buddy helps softens our heart and changes bad behavior.

Everyone needs **Prayer and Encouragement** which is like love—the more you give it away, the more you have.

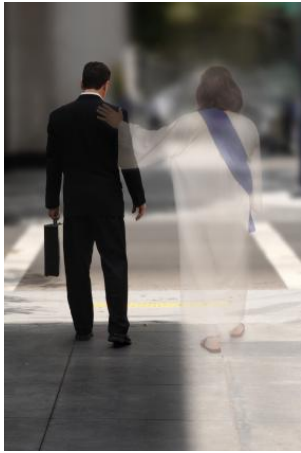


GBs Pray for each other

As we battle the ups and downs of life, men need as much support and encouragement as possible. We thrive on receiving positive comments rather than negative comments, whether it's at work, at home, on sports teams, or at school. Band together and be each other's Barnabas (known as "the encourager"). Apply my God Buddy version of the acrostic A.C.T.S. to your prayers:

- A is to being Authentic with each other.
- C means be Committed to making your relationship last.
- T is to Trust each other completely and speak the truth in love.
- S is to always be Supportive.

The last trait is **Teachability and Desire to Improve**. Your willingness to become more Christ-like will help your life in many ways.



GBs walk with Jesus

A desire to learn as a mentee, student, or disciple of someone you admire or has “been down the road” before you, helps in all areas of life. I included eight reasons to learn and study with friends.

Quite simply, being willing to learn from someone and studying in a group adds a built-in level of accountability that all men need.

There you have it: all the Traits of a God Buddy relationships. I trust you are applying them already and deepening your friendships.

Next up: a deeper dive into one of my favorite Bible verses for men.

Comment below though on which of these traits help you deepen your friendships and which need more of your attention.