

Why Do Friendships End?

My prior post, **The Seasons of Friendships** indicated there are seasons of fertility and growth with our friends but also seasons of decay and decline, quite often a season in which your relationship ends.

In my personal experience, the hardest way to lose a friend is due to their death (as I wrote about in *Missing My God Buddy, Chris*).

But there are also often other reasons that friendships end that are just as hard.



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Other Reasons Friendships End

Keith R. Anderson, author of the book *Friendships That Run Deep* described the many seasons of friendships (outlined in the aforementioned post) but he also included 5 reasons for why friendships end:

1. **Unintentional Withdrawal** – We simply drift apart and priorities change. We fade out of each other's lives without really meaning to do so.
2. **Intentional Avoidance** – We get hurt, mad, tired, bored, or too busy and simply avoid spending time with our friends.
3. **Intentional Analysis of the Relationship** – We agree "it's time to move on" because other priorities are more important.
4. **Closure by Conflict** – We have an argument about something important or even trivial but just decide to call it quits. We fade, fall out, opt-out or burn out.
5. **Failure to Give Grace, Forgiveness or Mercy** – Someone or both carry a grudge that can not be released.

In each case, the reason for closure could be a two-way street and either or both of you may be the reason the friendship ends.

Lack of Reciprocation

Another reason a friendship ends is when it becomes a one-way street, meaning there is a lack of mutuality.



No matter how much you want to be friends with another guy, you can only offer so many invitations to get together and only so much of yourself before reciprocation from the other person is needed. If there is none, then you may have to realize that friendship simply isn't worth your time.

However, if your friendship is too one-sided, you don't necessarily need to end it right away though. You can talk with them about your viewpoint and ask to make it more of a two-way street. You just may discover they are actually just in a short-season of busyness due to family or work responsibilities that is causing your friendship to require a brief pause.

You may decide though that your friendship may be in the season of closure.

The God Buddy Principle

Keith Anderson starts the last chapter of *Friendships That Run Deep* with **“Friendships that go deep will last.”** I will suggest to you that God Buddies go deep with each other in order to have long-lasting friendships.

Even some GB relationships may be hard to manage at times, especially during a season of storms when there may be valid reasons for closure.

But you should always end a deep friendship with honesty and grace.



So here are some ways to end any friendship gracefully and properly:

1. **Do it in person** – A text message, email or even a voicemail won't cut it.
2. **Pick the right time** – Try to avoid calling when the person is at work, with family, in public situation he might not feel comfortable talking, or when they are in an emotionally fragile state.
3. **Come prepared** – Don't catch them off-guard but be ready to talk about specific reasons and actions for your friendship in the future (i.e. cut off all communication or just hang out less often).
4. **Be honest** – Be frank and graceful. Don't be harsh.
5. **Suggest a cooling-off period** – Take a hiatus then reevaluate at a later date.
6. **Don't place blame** – The reality is that friendships end often and it doesn't always have to be somebody's fault.
7. **Show sympathy** – Show kindness and patience. Give your friend a chance to talk about his experience too
8. **Try to forgive** – Let go of any anger and stop ruminating on what went wrong.

Now, I'm suggesting that you should never end a friendship that does not go deep. It's just that those not willing to be fully invested, may not reach the depth needed to reach God Buddy levels and thus, may not last as long.

It's just one of the realities that even close friendships change.