Personal Response:

Friends should be based on quality, not on quantity.

Relationships we form throughout our life are critical to our happiness. The individuals we choose to surround ourselves with have the power to influence our character, inspire us, and encourage us to live up to our true potential. The reality is though, that not all of the relationships that we form will be substantial, fulfilling ones. This is why it is so important that when making friends, that we choose to build relationships of substance, of quality, instead of being concerned with the sheer quantity of friends that we can amass. Learning this lesson in my own life has been critical to my happiness and it has shown me how to be a better friend in the process.

Growing up, I had a lot of friends. I was involved in many extra-curricular activities like dance, martial arts, choir, theatre, etc. As such, I was never at a loss of having anyone to talk to. The problem was though, that I could never truly trust in these superficial relationships as they were fleeting. Looking back, I hung around with a fluctuating group of approximately 20 individuals, and though we were cordial and had fun with one another, the one true friend that I knew I could depend on was Jane. Jane was always there for me, and I was there for her. We helped each other through some difficult times such as when I lost my 3 grandparents, or when her father abandoned her family when she was young. There were nights that we would call each other at ungodly hours and sit on the phone in silence, taking comfort in the fact that the other person was there to listen when it was finally time to talk. Whether it was her struggling with her sexuality, or me obsessively fighting to maintain a solid A+ average, it didn’t matter. To this day, she is the only person that I have maintained contact with from high school, and though we may not speak for 7-8 months at a time, the moment we see each other again, it is as if time has not passed. A true testament to our relationship is the fact that recently she flew across the country for only 2 days so that she could stand in my wedding for me.

This being said, I have also witnessed some of my friends experience great pain over trying to achieve popularity status by making friends with fake individuals. The more friends you have is not necessarily better. In high school, one of my friends, Stephanie, decided that she wanted to be part of the “in” crowd. She started spreading gossip about herself so she could seem “cool”, and was foolish enough to tell one of these girls who she barely knew about the time that she was arrested by the cops for taking her mom’s car for a joy ride. Stephanie was wrong to trust this girl, and the she spread the rumour around the school that Stephanie had been high when this happened. Stephanie was humiliated and her reputation was ruined.

As you can see, I have known true friendship in my life, and it didn’t come from amassing 400 Facebook friends. If you are willing to put in the energy and really try to build honest, loyal relationships with a few core individuals, you will be blessed with the support you need to have a happy life. Many friends may mean more friends, but fewer are truer.