



The Company you Keep

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You become like the people you surround yourself with. You can read anything from fiction to religious texts to hear this statement or something similar. And it happens because we are affected by the people we spend time with. You hear the words of others and without being aware of it, you are absorbing what they say. With enough repetition we start to believe what others say. And with enough time around someone, we start to share their thoughts and beliefs. The actions of those we spend time with also influences us. If you spend enough time around people who are impulsive or act without thinking of the consequences of their actions, or in fact even act in cruel and harmful ways, it does start to become a new normal and you do change your actions, even if its initially a subtle change. And this is not only applicable for children and teenagers. It also applies for adults. So don't think that because you are old you are no longer influenced by the "gang" you hang with.

Now, how you think, feel, and act is so tied up with the thoughts and beliefs you absorb, you want to think about who you are spending time with. Are there people you spend time with every day? List some of them. You are taking in, at some level, whether you are aware of it or not, what they say and how they act. You even pick up on their emotions which is why some people really don't like being around negative people. It just makes them negative too. You may consider yourself to be a strong independent person and think that there is no way someone else is going to influence the way you think and act but think again. You are a human being and as such you are subject to the influence of the groups you belong to, and you cannot but be influenced by those you are around a lot.

Whether we are thinking about the people we spend time with, or the people our children spend time with, we are usually focused on avoiding potential harm. And so the people we avoid tend to be those with toxic behaviours. Some of these can include people who:

- Constantly criticise you
- Never apologise
- Never support your success
- Blame you for their problems
- Only ever talk about themselves
- Lie often
- Gossip about others
- Pressure you into doing things you don't want to do
- Create a lot of unnecessary drama
- Make you doubt yourself.

Usually when we discuss the topic of people you want to spend time with, we are warning people against spending time with those who may not be good for us. Those whose behaviour belittles us, is criminal or borders on criminal, and prevents us from reaching even some of our potential. We tend to be focused on warning people of dangers. But, of course, you can also go out of your way to spend time with people who are good for you, who build you up, who motivate you, and who encourage you to be the best version of yourself. In other words, don't just avoid people who will cause harm, seek out and build relationships with people who will help you.

With this knowledge you want to think about the people you spend time with. If you are wanting to make some changes in your life, or you have areas of personal development you are working on, then you really want to think about the people around you. You want to spend time with people who are going to support the changes you want to make and the growth you want to achieve. The people around you will either hamper or help you move in the direction you want to. If they are going to seriously hamper your growth, then you need to consider limiting your time with them. A lot. If they are likely to lead you into danger (and there are such people around), you want to stay away from them at all costs. If there is no one around you who will help you grow in the way you want to, then you do need to consider meeting such people and spending time with them