

# The Surprising Ways Friends Make Us Who We Are



## Friendfluence: The Surprising Ways Friends Make Us Who We

**Are** by Carlin Flora

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5



### By Scott Schieman

Friendship is one of the most important things in life. It can make us happy, healthy, and even more successful. But what exactly is friendship? And how does it work?

In his new book, *The Surprising Ways Friends Make Us Who We Are*, sociologist Scott Schieman explores the science of friendship. He draws on cutting-edge research to show how friends influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Schieman also offers practical advice on how to build stronger friendships and make the most of our social connections.

### The Science of Friendship

Schieman begins by defining friendship as "a close, long-term relationship between two or more people who share mutual affection and support." He

then reviews the research on the benefits of friendship. This research shows that friends can:

- Make us happier
- Improve our physical health
- Boost our mental health
- Help us cope with stress
- Make us more successful

Schieman also discusses the different types of friends we have. He argues that there are four main types of friends:

- **Intimate friends:** These are our closest friends, the people we share our deepest secrets with. They are typically the people we know best and who know us best.
- **Casual friends:** These are our friends who we see regularly but don't share as much intimacy with. They are typically people we share interests with, such as friends from work or school.
- **Acquaintances:** These are people we know but don't have a close relationship with. They are typically people we see occasionally, such as neighbors or coworkers.
- **Close acquaintances:** These are people who we are close to but don't share as much intimacy with as intimate friends. They are typically people we see regularly and share some common interests with, such as friends from a club or group.

Schieman argues that the type of friends we have can have a significant impact on our lives. Intimate friends are particularly important for our well-being, while casual friends can provide us with social support and companionship. Acquaintances can be helpful for networking and expanding our social circle, while close acquaintances can provide us with a sense of belonging and community.

## How Friends Influence Us

Schieman next discusses how friends influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. He argues that friends can influence us in three main ways:

- **Direct influence:** This is when friends directly tell us what to do or how to think. For example, a friend might tell us to go to a party or to vote for a certain candidate.
- **Indirect influence:** This is when friends influence us through their actions and behavior. For example, a friend who is always happy and optimistic might make us more positive and upbeat.
- **Social comparison:** This is when we compare ourselves to our friends and use them as a reference point for our own behavior. For example, we might compare our income to our friends' income or our weight to our friends' weight.

Schieman argues that friends can have a powerful influence on our lives. They can help us to make better decisions, to be more successful, and to live happier and healthier lives. However, it is important to be aware of the potential negative influences of friends as well. Friends can also pressure us to do things we don't want to do, to make bad decisions, or to engage in risky behavior.

## How to Build Stronger Friendships

Schieman concludes by offering practical advice on how to build stronger friendships and make the most of our social connections. He argues that the key to building stronger friendships is to be a good friend yourself. This means being supportive, understanding, and trustworthy. It also means being willing to listen to your friends and to help them out when they need it.

Schieman also offers the following tips for building stronger friendships:

- **Make time for your friends:** One of the best ways to build stronger friendships is to make time for your friends. This means making an effort to see them regularly and to do things that you enjoy together.
- **Be supportive:** Friends are there for each other through good times and bad. Be supportive of your friends when they are going through a tough time and celebrate their successes with them.
- **Be understanding:** Everyone makes mistakes. Be understanding when your friends make mistakes and don't hold them against them.
- **Be trustworthy:** Friends trust each other with their secrets and their vulnerabilities. Be trustworthy and keep your friends' secrets safe.
- **Be willing to forgive:** Everyone makes mistakes. Be willing to forgive your friends when they make mistakes and move on.

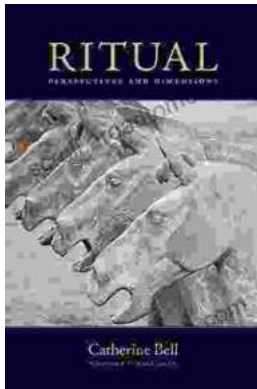
Friendship is one of the most important things in life. It can make us happier, healthier, and even more successful. By following these tips, you can build stronger friendships and make the most of your social connections.



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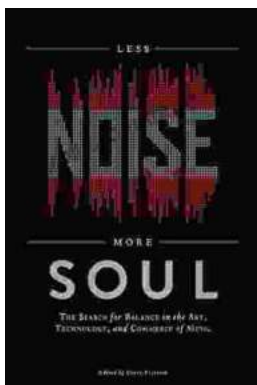
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