

## What Happened to My Old Friends?

Once someone makes an accusation toward you, it will be normal if you start feeling abandoned. People start moving away from you. Before long, people who you trusted last month, are acting like irritated even frightened strangers. Some of these people don't want to be associated with you anymore because they don't want to look guilty or like conspirators. Others might feel let down or embarrassed either for you or because of you. Still others are simply not sure how to respond, so they often avoid contact. These reactions are understandable. When these people abandon you, it hurts, but you can understand it.

But when your best friends abandon you, its much harder to understand. When they start to avoid you, cancel plans, or act distantly, it hurts most because it's at the time you need them most.

It's important to realize, however, that many of these people may not have ever been close friends. They were lifestyle friends. They liked being around you – you made them feel good – and they liked the activities you shared more than they may have deeply liked you as a person. Maybe 90% or more of our friends are like this. You might have tennis friends who wouldn't be friends if it wasn't for tennis. Work friends, who wouldn't be friends if you didn't work together.

In contrast to lifestyle friends, true friends are ones who share your values, are emotionally invested in you, who know your family, who you trust deeply, who are thoughtful, who don't judge you, and who are committed to helping you become a better and happier person.

Consider three types of friends: Season friends, reason friends, and close friends. Season friends were close to you at one point in time – maybe in college – but you drifted apart (at least until now). Reason friends are friends because you share the same profession, hobbies, or neighborhood. Reason friends are lifestyle friends.

You might feel hurt that lifestyle friends are not there right now, but you can understand why. Lifestyle friends will be back when your lifestyle returns.

Your close friends are the ones you want to focus on now. Get back in touch with them and let them be close.