

Making friends

Breaking the ice is not about a cold smoothie, or a consequence of global warming. It's an art form of human interaction that can be stressful for the uninitiated. But hey, if cavemen can make friends in their time, so can you, a highly developed species of *homo sapiens*!

Now, you may snort and say "I've already heard everything about how to make friends! Don't give me the same old spiel again!"

Well, I advise that you take my advice NOT to be so snotty (that's caveman behaviour), because you're going to embark on a reverse educational process.

It has been said: "If you want a friend, be friendly." Duh, right? Here're some ways to ease the stress of friend-making, and some ways to be a complete doofus. You pick.

As you begin a new academic year, start making friends early before the first day of semester. If you stay in university accommodation, join in welcome parties and get to know students from different faculties and courses. If you walk, bike or take the tram to uni, smile at people carrying the same uni files or bags.

Sounds lame maybe, but not everyone has the ability to befriend others easily, especially those who moved from another country, state or town.

Anxiety and dread in making new friends can cause what I observe to be doofus behaviour.

Guy: "So I was in my Chemistry Engineering class, and I noticed this cute girl sitting next to me."

Me: "Did you talk to her?"

Guy: "I wanted to, but then I remembered that a new Counter-Strike patch was coming out today, so I had to rush home to download it."

Me: "...Naturally."

Looks like the story of Guy meets Girl stops short at that. There isn't even a name to remember it by! Take an itsy-bit from Dale Carnegie's *How To Win Friends and Influence People*. It's written in 1936,



and still relevant 70 years later!

"Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language," Carnegie said.

Noted it down? Good. However, don't go overboard, with the person's name in every sentence though.

Some other money-back guarantees: Spread out your fishing nets. Say hello and talk to at least three people each day.

Cats and dogs can be chummy too. Urge others to talk about themselves. Ask pointed and intelligent questions.

Flock with birds of the same feather. Join sporting and special interest groups, clubs and societies, be it major-based, religion-based, sex-based, or career-based

organisations.

Have a memory like an elephant. Remember friends' details like birthdays, where they live, etc.

Gather honey but don't kick over the beehive. Don't criticize, condemn, or complain.

Put your eggs in more baskets. Increase contact with friends by utilising social networking sites. More reasons for another comment on Facebook and Myspace!

If you are a doofus, you don't have to be one for long. Making friends will happen organically when you follow Confucius' saying: "Have no friends not equal to yourself".

Jenny Chan

Join a club

Joining a club is a great way to meet new people. Monash University PhD student Helen Forbes-Mewett says that a club lets you spend time with those who share similar interests.

"Think of [American psychologist and father of humanistic psychology Abraham] Maslow, who ranked belonging and friendship after the need for security and basic physiological needs," she says.

"Joining a club can go a long way in reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness. For students from a non-English speaking background there is the added bonus of being able to practice their English language skills."

Some clubs let international students become accustomed to Australian culture. Forbes-Mewett says Monash University's international student friendship program helps international students meet and mix with locals. At the Gippsland campus there are regular outings and functions to help students mix and become familiar to the local environment.

Clubs are also a great opportunity for students to organise and run events on campus. "For instance, performance clubs may organise to present plays or musical performances to the community. Political clubs, on the other hand, may organise events to promote and support their cause, and this may involve having speakers address their group," Forbes-Mewett says.

The skills gained from organising such events will also look impressive on your resume. Employers look for students who do more than just study at uni. They want students who actually make the most of their time by becoming involved in university life. They also want students who are able to demonstrate their talents. Being involved in a club will help you to achieve these.

Joining a club has many benefits for students. It is a great way to meet new people, gain new skills and help students land their new job. They tend to cover a wide range of interests and will help make university life enjoyable. [Q](#)

Chrisoula Georgiou



Point Nepean Music Festival Tickets

Utimes and Definitive Events are giving away to readers of Utimes FIVE double weekend passes worth \$195 each to the Point Nepean Music Festival, in Portsea over Easter Weekend at the the unique heritage listed Point Nepean Quarantine Station, with the extraordinary line-up of Australian and international performers such as John Fogerty, Keith Urban, Sinéad O'Connor, Xavier Rudd, KT Tunstall, Eskimo Joe and many more.

To enter send an email with 'WIN POINT NEPEAN MUSIC FESTIVAL' in the subject line to win@utimes.com.au by March 10. Also let us know your name and where you study.

