

- » Exploring why making friends is hard
- » Understanding loneliness and social isolation
- » Identifying turning points when it's helpful to make new friends

Chapter **1**

Understanding the Challenges of Making Friends

Given that you've picked up this book, chances are you've been finding it challenging to make new friends as an adult. If so, you're in good company, because lots of people feel exactly the same way.

As a mental health therapist, I've found that loneliness, having no one to talk to, feeling left out, not fitting in, and lacking a support system are all emotionally painful and difficult issues that are often on people's minds. If you've been finding it hard to make new friends for a long time — even years — don't despair. Making friends does get more challenging the older you get, but making a new friend as an adult is still very realistic and doable. Making new friends is one of life's joys, and friendship makes life fun and exciting. This book can be your road map to creating the connections you've always hoped for.

Many people feel that making new friends is a lot like dating. You have to put yourself out there repeatedly, make small talk with lots of people, go on lots of friend dates, initiate get-togethers, and suffer through some rejection before you find your person. You'll find that you vibe with some people and you don't with

others. Making new friends as an adult is ultimately a numbers game, and the more you put yourself out there, the more likely it is that you'll meet your ideal friend.

Before this book delves into all the steps (and skills) you'll need to master in order to make new friends, this chapter explores all the reasons why making new friends as an adult can be so challenging. Sometimes it's helpful to identify the reasons why something has been so hard in order to understand the journey better. It's also comforting to know you're not alone in your struggles. Understanding more about why making friends has been so difficult will give you new insight and help you feel less alone in your friend-making journey.

In this chapter, I explore the main reasons why making new friends is challenging as an adult. Then I discuss how difficulty making friends contributes to loneliness and social isolation. Next, I introduce several key turning points when making new friends is easier. And I wrap up the chapter with several reasons why adulthood is the ideal time to make new friends.

Exploring the Reasons Why Making New Friends Is Challenging

You've probably noticed that making new friends as an adult can be challenging, but you may be wondering exactly why that is. Understanding why it's so challenging for many people to make new friends can help you feel less alone in the journey and help you understand why it can sometimes feel so daunting. When you understand the challenges, you can gain new insight into your struggles and figure out what your best action plan is to make new friends.

Making new friends as an adult is challenging for many different reasons, including lack of free time and lack of opportunity to meet lots of new people the way you could back in your school days. It was easier to make new friends when you were younger because you had an abundance of free time to hang out with people and you saw lots of people at school. But when you're an adult, everyone is so busy — it's harder to justify making the time to meet and get to know new people when so many other things are demanding your time and attention. Plus, it takes a lot of time to make a new friend. A 2018 study by Professor Jeffrey Hall, published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, found that it takes around 40 to 60 hours of spending time together to turn an acquaintance into a casual friend, 80 to 100 hours to turn a casual friend into a friend, and more than 200 hours to make a best friend. That's a lot of hours that many busy adults aren't willing or able to devote to friend-making.

Here are some of the things people complain about when it comes to making new friends as an adult:

- » Everyone already has their friends, and they aren't looking for new ones.
- » Everyone is too busy to make new friends.
- » People don't prioritize friendships.
- » No one has time for me.
- » I put myself out there and invite people to do things, but no one reciprocates.
- » All my friendships feel one-sided.
- » I reach out to others all the time, but no one bothers to reach out to me.
- » I moved just a little farther away, and now none of my friends will make time to see me.

Do any of these concerns resonate with you?

As you do some self-reflection about why it seems so hard to make new friends as an adult, it can also be helpful to contrast why it seemed so much easier to make new friends in high school and/or college. According to a 2019 report by Snapchat called “The Friendship Report,” the average age to make a best friend is the age of 21. During your college years, you’re surrounded by similar-age people for many hours a day, all in the trenches together, and all having new experiences together, so there’s lots of time to get to know each other. That’s especially true in college for those who live on-campus in dorms. All those late-night study sessions, parties, and hangout time with roommates often leads to lifelong friendships.



REMEMBER

There’s no other time period, unless you live with roommates as an adult or live in a retirement community as an older adult, that can compare to the intensity of the social interaction in college and the young adult years.

Contrast this to adult life, where you’re working full-time, and fitting in social time with friends in bits and pieces wherever you can. You no longer have leisurely time to spend hours getting to know people in a close-knit setting. For working adults, the workplace, which is one of the main places where adults make friends, isn’t as conducive to making friends as college was. Sure, you’re working in the same building (if you’re even working in the office at all), but you’re all at different ages and stages, and you may live far apart from each other, so it’s not as ideal a situation as making friends when you were younger.

In the following sections, I explain all the key reasons why it's harder for adults to make new friends, including lack of time, prioritizing other aspects of their lives over friendships, and having rusty social skills, among others.

Believing they don't have time

One of the main reasons why it's so hard for adults to make new friends is that they don't have much free time to socialize. With many adults working full-time and taking care of all their other responsibilities (for example, raising children, doing household chores, running errands, exercising, wrangling pets, taking care of elderly parents or other family members, dealing with car repairs, and going to medical appointments, not to mention sleeping), it's no wonder so many of them feel that they have very little free time left over to socialize.

When they do socialize, many adults turn to the tried-and-true friendships they've had for decades (usually from high school or college) instead of putting in the time and effort to make a new friend from scratch. It makes sense — many adults are stretched thin and pulled in many different directions, leaving little remaining energy to make new friends.



REMEMBER

Proximity is very important for new friendships (see Chapter 5). The closer a potential new friend lives, the more likely you'll actually become friends because coordinating get-togethers with people who live close to you is easier than it is with people who live farther away.

One of the variables that makes it harder to make new friends as an adult is living far from your potential new friend. The “30-minute rule” from a 2007 study in the journal *Social Networks* says that people are less willing to visit a friend who lives more than 30 minutes away. If you live within a few minutes from a new friend, it's much more convenient and easier to fit a quick get-together into your busy schedules.



TIP

When looking to make new friends, focus on finding friends who live close by, which you can do by meeting neighbors, going to your local community center, and finding other local community places to make new friends.



REMEMBER

The difficulty of coordinating schedules makes it challenging for adults to make new friends, especially if they have kids. Juggling work, kids' activities and transportation, plus all the other household tasks really uses up a lot of time. Finding time to meet up can be challenging when people's schedules are so different. It really helps to join a hobby or interest group that has regular meetings, so you have that dedicated time on your calendar to socialize with others who share your interests (see Chapter 5 for more on joining groups).

Prioritizing work, family, and romantic relationships over friendships

Another reason why it's harder for adults to make new friends is that people tend to prioritize work, family, and romantic relationships over friendships. The relationships we have with our spouses or partners are often seen as the core relationships in our lives, and they're often thought of as essential to a happy and fulfilled life — friendships are usually viewed as secondary or nonessential.

Spending time and energy finding a romantic partner usually takes priority to spending time and energy finding friends, which tends to get shifted to the back burner, especially from the late 20s through the 40s.

Moving away and starting over

Another reason why it's hard to make friends as an adult is that people move a lot. You put all this work into building a friendship, and then your friend moves away. We've all been there, and it's hard to cope with. It can make people not want to bother investing in a friendship, because moving is so common.

These days, many people live far from their hometowns. They move away from their family and friends and settle down elsewhere. Then they have to start all over and make new friends and support networks from scratch.

Moving a lot can make it more challenging to find friends. It's hard to keep putting down roots only to pack up and move again and start all over a few years later.

Being rigid about friendships

Because many adults have such little free time, some are rigid or picky about friendships and who they spend their free time with. This means that they're often looking for a potential friend who checks all their boxes, and they're less willing to consider someone who only checks some of them. This can result in being exceptionally choosy about meeting up. They're often less willing to give new people a chance, and if they don't feel a connection after one get-together, some won't give a person a second chance. This can make it extra challenging to make new friends.

Have you ever heard the well-known quote by Jim Rohn: "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with"? Many people want to surround themselves with friends who are positive influences or who bring something they value to the friendship. This could be someone with whom they have common interests, someone who works in the same field, someone who can teach them

something, someone who has the same fashion sense, someone they can network with, someone with a sense of humor, or someone with similar values. Some people make a snap judgment about whether you have a quality they value based on your outward appearance or how you present yourself, and they can disqualify a potential friend without having all the information.



TIP

What can help is expanding your idea of what a friendship must be. Instead of wanting one best friend you can do everything with, keep in mind that a friend doesn't have to check *all* your boxes in order to hang out with them and have a good time. Instead, focus on having some friends who are activity partners you meet up with to do specific activities. For example, you may have a yoga friend, a golf friend, a friend you shop with, and a friend you try new restaurants with. The friend you play golf with may have no interest in shopping, but they can be your golf buddy and you can enjoy the conversations you have with them in that specific setting. Having friends for different activities can help expand your social circle.



TIP

One of the best ways to make new friends is to join a social hobby/interest group. You'll meet others who share your interests and who are also looking to make new friends who share those interests. You'll also have plenty to talk about, which will make easing into a friendship easier. (See Chapter 5 for more on joining groups.)



REMEMBER

Because many adults can be picky about friendships, rejection is a fact of life when you're looking to make new friends. Rejection stings, but it behooves you to mentally prepare yourself for this. Remember that rejection is something that everyone goes through, whether they're looking for platonic friends or romantic partners. You won't like everyone, and not everyone will like you. Many people have trouble coping with rejection, but remembering that it's part of the process and that making friends is a numbers game can help you bounce back quicker. Reframing negative self-talk about rejection into more neutral self-talk, and keeping a growth mindset ("I haven't made a new friend yet") are helpful ways to cope with rejection.

Being apathetic

Another common challenge for adults trying to make new friends is apathy. People can be apathetic and don't feel like taking the initiative with new friendships. Sometimes it's easier to just stay home than it is to reach out to a new friend to set up a get-together.

If you're proactive about reaching out to friends and setting up get-togethers and other people are apathetic, it can feel frustrating and disappointing.

Have you ever been told, “Let’s get together soon” and then you never heard from the other person again? Or when you did try to set something up, has the person not responded? This complaint is a frequent one from adults trying to make new friends. They feel like they’re always the one who has to initiate everything and take the lead on planning get-togethers. It’s disheartening to feel like you always have to make the first move, or else the friendship withers.



TIP

When trying to make new friends, try to say yes to social invitations and opportunities more often. If you go, it’s likely you’ll have a great time. You never know what social opportunities you’ll discover just by saying yes more often and being more open-minded.

Navigating trust issues

By the time you’re a full-fledged adult, you’ve probably had some friendships where there have been trust issues. It’s often harder to trust people as you get older, because some people have been burned before, and now are hesitant to trust again. It’s also often harder to be vulnerable with new friends as you get older.

Having trust issues can make someone less willing to consider being friends with someone new, and instead stick with their tried and true. It takes a lot of time for some people to build trust. They can be slower to open up and keep people in the acquaintance stage for a long time, before they feel comfortable.



TIP

If you have a hard time trusting others, take things slow with a new friend.

Being hampered by social anxiety

Another reason why adults have a harder time making new friends is because social anxiety can sometimes get in the way. *Social anxiety* is an intense fear of being watched, judged, and scrutinized by others, and it can make people avoid social situations because they worry about feeling embarrassed or humiliated.



REMEMBER

Social anxiety can make it harder to put yourself out there, be yourself with others, and take the steps necessary to make new friends. If you’re feeling a level of anxiety in social situations that’s causing you distress and negatively impacting your functioning, it can help to talk with a therapist or other mental health professional. (See Chapter 8 for more on coping with social anxiety.)

Having fewer opportunities to make new friends

Another reason why it's harder to make new friends as an adult is that adults in general have fewer opportunities to make new friends. Children, teens, and college students are in school with their peers for many hours each day. Plus, they may do extracurricular activities and go to summer camp, and they have time to hang out casually with friends after school. Adults, by contrast, typically have fewer regular places where they see people and socialize. Because they have less free time, they have less of an opportunity to join clubs or other social activities where they may meet new people.



TIP

Because adults generally have fewer opportunities to make new friends, it can be easier to try reconnecting with old friends. To start, think of which of your old friends (or friends of friends) may be receptive to your reaching out. Look through your social media contact lists as a good starting point for deciding who you could contact.

Having rusty social skills

Adults' social skills can diminish over time, and there are several reasons why. Social skills can atrophy if you work from home and don't see your coworkers often, or if you have more of a solitary office job. We get so used to being in our houses all the time, working and socializing from home, that thinking about inviting a friend to meet up in person can be daunting. Then, because we're out of practice, it can become harder to make new friends.

Additionally, all the hours spent behind screens and on social media don't improve people's social skills. When you're sitting passively behind a screen, just scrolling along and liking and commenting on posts, instead of catching up with friends in person, your real-life social skills can get rusty.

Social skills aren't explicitly taught in school, but many kids pick them up naturally, in school and on the playground. These days, however, kids and teens are interacting frequently via screens, whether by texting their friends instead of talking in person or playing video games and interacting socially online. They're spending less time interacting in person, and some aren't learning crucial social skills.

Have you been to a restaurant lately and noticed a table where everyone is on their own devices and not talking to their table-mates? It's a discouraging sight to see.



Participating in a hobby or interest group can help you further develop your social skills. That's because you have an activity to keep busy with while you're socializing, so the focus isn't fully on talking. For example, if you're hiking with a hiking group, you can focus on the nature around you while having conversations versus sitting across from someone in a coffee shop, which can be anxiety-producing.

Having smaller social circles due to the pandemic

Another reason why it's harder to make friends as an adult is because the pandemic narrowed many people's social circles. After a year or two of being relatively isolated at home, some people continued to keep their social circles small, and there wasn't as much of an appetite to get outside to socialize and meet new people. People got used to their social circles being small and insular, especially when "pods" were common for schoolchildren and their families. Plus, many people went from working in person to working from home during the pandemic, and people generally became more isolated. Some of these preferences to keep a smaller social circle are persisting even several years later, which can make it harder for adults to make new friends.

Even though things seem to have gotten back to normal, some adults are finding that their once-robust social circles have dwindled, their interest in socializing and entertaining has diminished, and some of their previous friends have moved away. They're also noticing that their social skills have gotten rusty after being isolated so long during the pandemic.



If your social circles diminished during the pandemic, you can replenish them by joining groups such as hobby/interest groups, religious congregations, volunteer groups, sports leagues, in-person classes, and newcomers' groups, which are some of the best places to make new friends. Look for social-focused groups or classes that meet weekly so you see the same people on a regular basis.

Exploring How Common It Is to Struggle with Friendships

If you're struggling to make new friends as an adult, and finding it surprisingly and unexpectedly challenging, you're far from alone. It's common to want more robust and fulfilling friendships but not know how to go about getting them or where to find them. It's also common to feel disappointed and dissatisfied with

the friendships you have but feel daunted by the idea of going out and making new friends.

Adults often feel like they need more friends than they actually have. A 2016 study published in *Royal Society Open Science* found that people have the most friends they'll ever have by age 25, and then those numbers decrease until age 45, when they level out. Friendships have been dwindling in the United States over the years. In 1990, only 3 percent of people said they had no close friends, but in 2021, that number increased to 12 percent, according to research done by Gallup and the American Perspectives Survey. This is a big difference, and it helps explain why people are feeling so starved for friendships these days.

In the following sections, I explain why loneliness is such a pressing issue for many adults, and the reasons why many people feel so socially isolated.

Exploring the epidemic of loneliness

If you've been feeling lonely lately, it helps to understand where that feeling is coming from and how common it is. According to the U.S. surgeon general, Dr. Vivek Murthy, loneliness is a public health epidemic in the United States. In May 2023, the surgeon general issued an 85-page advisory that described how significant a scourge loneliness has become. According to a 2018 survey by insurer Cigna, 46 percent of Americans feel alone. The Cigna survey also found that younger adults, ages 18 to 22, tend to be significantly lonelier than older adults 72 and older.



REMEMBER

Feeling lonely is very common, even though most people don't talk openly about it. Loneliness is a subjective, emotionally painful feeling of wanting to be around people but not being able to find friends or connections. It's a feeling of wanting to share your life and experiences with another person but having no one to share them with. It can feel like an emptiness and a feeling of not being seen or valued.

When you're unable to have the kinds of friendships you want, you can feel lonely. You can feel lonely even when surrounded by friends and family if you're not connecting meaningfully with anyone.



REMEMBER

Loneliness can also make it more challenging to make new friends. Lonely people tend to stay in more, and if you don't leave the house often it becomes harder to socialize and meet new people. Lonely people can also find that their motivation for making new friends has diminished, because of all the rejection they've dealt with over the years.

Why are so many people lonely these days? There are many possible theories. Working long hours and not having enough free time or energy to socialize, not knowing neighbors due to frequent moves and relocations, lingering feelings of

isolation from the pandemic, and getting our social interaction fix online instead of in person are some of the reasons why loneliness is so pervasive.

Social media is another big factor in people's loneliness, as well in as our challenges in making friends. Social media makes us feel lonely because we're sitting behind a screen, passively consuming information about other people's lives and events. Social media can make it seem like everybody else is having an amazing time, constantly getting together with friends, because that's all they post online (no one's posting photos of themselves sitting home alone). Plus, when you're following dozens or hundreds of people, it can feel like all those people have a ton of friends, but if you look at any one person's social media, you may see that they actually only post photos once in a while. You're being inundated daily by the sheer quantity of photos from a huge group of people, and that's what makes it *seem* like they're all having fun without you.

Social media makes it easier to stay in touch with other people, because we can share our news with many people simultaneously, instead of having to tell the same updates to each one. But it also makes people feel like they've already caught up with others, by seeing the photos from their events and activities, so there's less need to catch up in person.

Many people don't even go to their high school reunions anymore because they feel like they've caught up with what their classmates are up to via social media.

But using just social media to socialize makes it harder to have fulfilling, enriching friendships. We're missing out on connecting face-to-face. People now prefer to sit at home and text their friends to catch up instead of gathering in person to chat about the latest goings-on. This is causing their social skills to diminish, which makes it harder to nurture actual friendships.

Another factor in our loneliness is working long hours and not having enough leisure time to socialize. People aren't spending as much quality time together anymore, because catching up over texts or emails is quicker and easier than meeting in person. When you have limited free time to fit in all your chores and errands during the week, connecting in the way that's the most efficient can seem the most appealing, but it's really causing people to stay more isolated.



TIP



EXPLORE

Aim to meet up with friends in person in order to make and maintain optimal friendships.

If you've been feeling lonely, could you find more time for socializing if you wanted to? Think about how you spend your nonwork hours. Could you cut back on some of the things that aren't essential and fit in more in-person time for friends?

Understanding social isolation

Many adults feel socially isolated because they have small social support networks and don't get together with other people in person very often. Here are some of the reasons for this pervasive sense of social isolation:

- » **People move far away.** With many people moving far from their hometowns and settling away from family and the friends they grew up with, it can be difficult for adults to build new social networks from scratch. People's friends and family are scattered all over the country or the world. It's also hard not to be able to rely on the village they grew up with, where they felt known in the community they grew up in.
- » **People don't join clubs and groups as often.** In the past, group/club membership was a significant way that many people made friends and socialized. They would join community and service groups or invited others over for a weekly card game or poker night. Now people join online groups more often, including support groups and hobby/interest groups.
- » **Long hours leave little energy for socializing.** With people working full-time, their spouse/partner working full-time, having little vacation time, and not having a village to help out, they're exhausted and they don't have the energy to go out and meet new people. In the past, people had more time and energy to socialize. They talked with their neighbors regularly, joined clubs, hung out on porches, and hosted dinner parties. Today, people rely more on online connections, because they're quicker and easier.
- » **We don't know our neighbors as well.** With many people moving frequently for new jobs and new opportunities, getting to know our neighbors is harder. We also don't have the need to go to someone's house to ask to borrow a cup of sugar anymore, because grocery stores are close by or we can order anything we need and have it delivered. And with people working long hours, there's less time to leisurely sit on the front porch with a drink and chat about what's new.
- » **We live in a disposable society.** With so many items today being made of plastic and inexpensive materials, we throw things away rather than fix them, and that mindset sometimes extends to friendships. People are quick to shed friendships that aren't working instead of trying to work things out. That's part of why ghosting seems to have gained in popularity — people think it's okay to just get rid of friendships without explanation.
- » **We're staying in more often.** Today, people enjoy staying home more, and going out can seem like a hassle. We're at home more because so many people work remotely, and also because our homes have every convenience. People can stay in and get their social needs met through social media, online groups, or video games.

Identifying New Turning Points

Even though making new friends as an adult can be generally challenging, there are a few turning points in life where people feel more of a need to make new friends.

When people go through a major life change, whether it's moving to a new area or becoming a new parent, they tend to be more eager and receptive to making new friends. When you go through these turning points, you want friends who can relate to you and who can join you on your new journey. These are the times when you should make an extra effort to attend hobby/interest groups, put yourself out there, follow up, and reach out to new people regularly. Soon you'll be expanding your social circle in no time.

In the following sections, I walk you through some of these major turning points when you can more easily make new friends.

Moving to a new city and starting over

Most people feel a lot of anxiety about moving to a new city and starting over. It's hard to make such a big change and not know many people in your new area. But moving to a new city is a great opportunity to build a whole new social circle from scratch.



TIP

Most people who've recently moved are eager to meet new people and make new friends. Joining a newcomers' group can be a great way to meet other newcomers to an area.

When you move to a new city, try to get to know your new neighbors as soon as you can. Not only does getting to know your neighbors help ease the transition to your new area, but they can also help you with recommendations for new doctors, dentists, and hairstylists. There's a window of time when it's best to introduce yourself to your new neighbors — try to do it within the first three months of moving in. (It can get a little awkward if you wait too long.)

Try to meet your new neighbors by catching them when they're outside or doing yard work. If they don't come by to welcome you, you can always ring their doorbell to introduce yourself and exchange contact information (which can come in handy if they ever need to get a hold of you). Consider inviting your new neighbors over for tea or coffee, or even a cookout or housewarming party if you're feeling up to it. Neighbors can end up becoming great friends because of their proximity,

because you see them so often as you're coming and going. Proximity is an important ingredient in new friendships (see Chapter 5 for more on proximity).

Becoming a new parent

Having a baby and becoming a new parent is another turning point where people are eager to meet others and make new friends. As a new parent, you want to meet other parents to share the parenting journey with who are in a similar life stage with similarly aged kids.



REMEMBER

Being a new parent lends itself well to meeting other parents, because you'll often find yourself at kid-friendly places like playgrounds where everyone else is standing around watching their kids play. Striking up a conversation with a fellow parent in this kind of casual setting can feel easier than walking up to someone you don't know at a party or networking event. There will also be plenty of playdates where you'll make small talk with the other parents while your kids play.

There are lots of groups for new parents to join, too. You can find groups for parents of babies through your hospital or ob-gyn's office, or through Meetup (www.meetup.com) or Facebook groups (www.facebook.com). Sometimes just having same-aged kids and going through similar life stages gives you enough in common to form a friendship.

New parents are often tired and stressed, but you can find ways to make socializing work with young children, like inviting friends over to your house after the kids are asleep for board games or going out after the kids' bedtime for a ladies' night out while your spouse or partner watches them.

Getting divorced and having to create a new social life

Getting divorced is another life turning point where many people need to rebuild their social circles. Sometimes people lose many of their friends who were their ex-spouse's in a divorce, which can be painful. Others want to make new friends who are also divorced for support as they go through the divorce process.



TIP

Joining DivorceCare support groups (www.divorcecare.org) and new hobby/interest groups can be a good way to make new friends who can relate to what you're going through. Turn to Chapter 16 for more on navigating friendships through divorce.

Being widowed

Being widowed is another turning point where people feel lonely and are looking to make new friends. Sometimes they lose their spouse's circle of friends because they drift away after the person passes away. A widowed person may also be uncomfortable socializing in groups with couples and prefer to look for new friends who are single.



TIP

Joining an in-person grief support group can be a good way to make new friends who understand the journey you're on.

Retiring and leaving friends behind at work

When you retire, it's another huge turning point in your life. You leave behind your coworkers, many of whom you've worked with for decades. Saying goodbye to these coworkers and transitioning into the unstructured free time of retirement can be difficult, especially if you didn't have friends outside of work.



TIP

Retirement is an ideal time to make new friends. Attending programs at a senior center, joining new hobby/interest groups, and joining retirement support groups are all ways you can make new friends.

Outgrowing your friend group

People outgrow their friend group for a variety of reasons. Maybe you've done some intense personal development lately and feel like you've outgrown your friends, or perhaps you've started on a major life change (like getting married or starting a family) and feel like your friends can't relate. Regardless of the reasons why you feel you've outgrown your friend group, it's a good time to make new friends. Think about making new friends by joining hobby/interest groups, attending new events, making small talk with new people, and putting yourself out there.

Working from home

If you've started working from home instead of going into an office, this is another good opportunity to make some new friends. When you work from home, it can be helpful to make some new friends who are available for daytime lunch breaks or coffee get-togethers, to make working from home feel less isolating. You can find these new friends by looking for daytime get-together groups or work-from-home support groups, or by posting in local social media groups looking for daytime friends and get-togethers.

Understanding Why Adulthood Is a Great Time for New Friendships

Now that you know many of the reasons why adults find it hard to make new friends, you may feel like the cards are stacked against you. But the good news is, there are many reasons why adulthood is actually an *ideal* time to explore new friendships:

- » You know yourself better than you did when you were younger, and you've had years of experience with friendships, so you know what you're looking for in a friend.
- » You have a stronger grasp of what you want and don't want, based on past experiences with other friendships, which will help you find the best friendship matches.
- » You may have well-developed hobbies and interests and want to spend time with others who share them.
- » You're more self-confident and you can more effectively advocate for your needs in a relationship.
- » You understand better how to work through friendship conflict without resorting to ghosting or cutting off a friendship.
- » You have better communication skills now and can express your thoughts and feelings to your friends more effectively.
- » You know why you'd make a good friend and what you can offer a new friend.