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## Let's not leave anyone alone

10.3.2025 — Riikka Kramer



Do you have a lot of friends? If so, great, you're in a lucky position. Do you have so many friends that you don't feel you need any more? If you answered yes, then stop for a moment to think. People who do not experience loneliness have the greatest responsibility to make lonely people feel less lonely. Making friends is not easy for everyone. Let's try to do what we can together so that no one is left alone.

A lonely person may be shy to join a ready-made group. Cliques cause anxiety in those who do not feel that they belong to any group. Even if you have already formed a close-knit group of friends during your studies, could you still show with your own attitude and appearance that you can fit in?

Imagine a situation where you really want to have friends, but you don't really dare to approach anyone, because you assume that everyone already has their own group of friends, and no one probably wants to get to know you, even though you are a good guy worth getting to know. You hope that someone will ask you to join them, because taking the initiative would emphasize your experience of loneliness and exclusion even more. This is where you, who don't experience loneliness, step in. Could you be the initiator?

If making friendships is easy for you, why not use this great talent of yours as much as possible. You can save someone's day by asking how they are doing or by asking them to join them for lunch. Maybe it can lead to a deeper friendship over time, or maybe not. However, every encounter has a meaning. Each of us deserves to be seen and accepted.

We may have assumptions about what a lonely person looks like. Maybe quiet, shy, withdrawn and sad. However, loneliness is not visible on the outside. Even an extroverted person can experience loneliness. So don't assume anything. Get to know new people without presuppositions that they are

not my type of person based on their appearance. Feel free to ask if you want to join. A person usually tells you if they don't need company at that moment, but want to be alone. The most important thing is that you ask, because the other party may not have the courage to do it.

Seriousness can sometimes be interpreted as hostility or arrogance. If a person is serious by definition, it often does not mean that they do not want to get to know each other. Not everyone has the same natural smile. For example, people on the autism spectrum are characterized by low expressiveness. A shy person can give an arrogant image of themselves completely by accident. If you go into situations quietly and with a serious expression, others may think that the guy doesn't even want to be involved, even though the truth is completely different.

To avoid misinterpretations, it is good to be aware of the effect of facial expressions and expressionlessness. However, a person who is initially serious may turn out to be an uncontrollably funny person over time. For many people who warm up slowly, a serious basic expression may be like a protective shell behind which to look at situations. Their own personality may only be shown after the friendship has deepened. It can often happen that a person who is initially timid also becomes active in a friendship, as long as they feel that the situation is safe. In other words, the initiator does not have to be the initiator always and forever. Reciprocity is the foundation of friendship.

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