

Men, Friendship & Vulnerability

Advanced (C1-C2)



WARM UP

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. What makes a friendship feel real?
2. What do you find easy/hard about keeping close friends as an adult?
3. What helps you move from small talk to “real talk”?

Part 2. Read the statements below and decide if you agree (A), disagree (D), or partially agree (P). Then, explain your reasoning.

1. “Real friendship requires admitting fear or failure at least occasionally.”
2. “After 30, most men can’t build deep friendships without a shared activity to anchor them.”
3. “Mixed-gender friendships make it easier to talk about feelings than single-gender ones.”
4. “Social expectations to ‘be strong’ do more harm than good to men’s friendships today.”



Part 3. Match each word/phrase to its correct definition. Can you guess any before looking at the options?

Camaraderie

Cosiness

Vulnerability

Inherent conflict

Bedrock

Let down one's guard

1. _____ Close friendly trust, especially in a group
2. _____ A built-in clash between two demands
3. _____ The basic foundation of something
4. _____ Allow yourself to relax your defences
5. _____ Warm, safe, comfortable feeling
6. _____ Being open about your feelings, fears, or needs—even though it carries the risk of criticism or rejection.

Unperturbed

Fed up

Barricaded

Despair

Tenderness

Unflinching

1. _____ Deep sadness/hopelessness
2. _____ Gentleness; warmth and care
3. _____ Refuse to back down; steady and firm
4. _____ Not worried, upset, or disquieted
5. _____ Tired and irritated with something
6. _____ Protective walling-off from others emotionally

Part 4. Match each starter to the best ending to form natural collocations/phrases/sentences from the video we are going to watch.

The bedrock...

An inherent conflict...

Be barricaded...

Be capable of...

Be more than...

Argue...

1. _____ in themselves
2. _____ of true friendship
3. _____ fed up
4. _____ against despair
5. _____ between what is required of being a man and what is involved in being a friend
6. _____ tenderness

VIDEO ACTIVITY

Part 1. Before watching the video, discuss the following questions.

1. What topics do your friends usually talk about? When does it go deeper?
2. Do you think "help me" is a phrase friends use enough? Why/why not?
3. What simple tools could make honest chats easier (online/offline)?

Part 2. Watch once. Note three central claims you heard and one line that resonated with you.

Central claims

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Line that resonated with you

- 1.

Part 3. Watch the video again and decide if each statement is true (T) or false (F) based on the video. If false, can you correct it?

1. Friendship is generally easy for men. (T/F)
2. A key barrier is a clash between masculine norms and what friendship needs. (T/F)
3. Talking about football or technical topics is enough for deep friendship. (T/F)
4. Admitting fear or asking for help can start real friendship. (T/F)
5. The speaker suggests conversation cards with braver questions. (T/F)
6. Men are inherently incapable of tenderness. (T/F)

Part 4. Complete the missing parts of the quotes from the video.

1. "The _____ of true friendship is — unfortunately — _____ vulnerability."
2. "There won't be a friendship that properly counts until we _____ ourselves to be as weak as we are."
3. "Most would agree such cards were, naturally, _____ and unnecessary."
4. "The _____ is that men are so _____ able to direct these emotions toward one another."

VIDEO FOLLOW-UP

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. What's a friendly way to invite a deeper chat?
2. Where's your line between privacy and openness?
3. What would a non-cringey "conversation card" question look like?
4. Where do mixed-gender friendships help/hinder openness?

Part 2. Read this quote from the video. Say what it means to you (agree/disagree and why), and share one brief real-life example.

"They (men) must waste so much time, and be so brave, in defending an illusion that they never asked to be a part of."

Part 3. Debate each statement below, giving one clear argument for and one against each, then share your verdict.

1. "Prompt cards in pubs would deepen conversation without killing the vibe."
2. "Mixed-gender groups make openness easier than single-gender ones."
3. "Workplaces should sponsor regular 'friendship spaces'."
4. "The 'be strong' script does more harm than good to men's friendships."
5. "Online friendships can be as deep as offline ones."
6. "Men-only spaces still matter."

REVIEW ACTIVITY & FINAL THOUGHTS...

Part 1. Use at least 5 of the words/phrases below in a sentence related to male loneliness.

Camaraderie

Cosiness

Vulnerability

Inherent conflict

Bedrock

Let down one's guard

Unperturbed

Fed up

Barricaded

Despair

Tenderness

Unflinching

Part 2. Discuss the questions below to reflect on what you've learnt during this lesson.

1. What idea from today surprised you, and why?
2. Think of a time (yours or someone else's) when someone let down their guard a little—what changed in the conversation?
3. What's a friendly sentence you could use this week to invite a real chat?
4. What might stop you from having that deeper chat—and what's one simple way around it?

