

And you cannot develop intimacy and trust when your every casual remark is posted online to be read by scores of people. But why is this? Why can't we simply use modern technology to have all the friends we want? We depend on technology to solve all our other problems — or so it seems.

Aristotle has already given us the answer. It takes time to develop the trust needed for friendship to develop. It takes time to really get to know a person, to get beyond the surface façade that we often project on social media sites. As clinical psychologist Sherry Turkle says in her book *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*: “The ties we form through the Internet are not, in the end, the ties that bind. But they *are* the ties that preoccupy.” Remember Aristotle's two qualifications of friendship: (1) mutual good-will and (2) reciprocity. Without either of these two conditions, you don't have a friendship.

Another point is that true friendship touches us deeply. Kahlil Gibran says in his book *The Prophet*: “Let there be no purpose in friendship save the deepening of the spirit.” There is nothing wrong with friendships based on utility. Nor is there anything wrong with those based on pleasure. Chances are, many of our relationships fall into those two categories. But while these are useful and necessary, they rarely touch the core of our being. Furthermore, problems sometimes occur when we confuse those secondary types with friendships based on goodness. That happens when one or the other partner in a friendship fails or forgets to remember the basis of their relationship. Aristotle observed that most quarrels between friends arise when that happens. And it sometimes occurs when one person deliberately misrepresents his motives to the other.

Comparing true friendship with the secondary types, Montaigne said: “Let not these other, common friendships be placed in this rank.” “I advise you not to confuse the rules of the two. You must walk in those other friendships bridle in hand, with prudence and caution. The knot is not so well tied that there is no cause to mistrust it.”

Finally, we can end with a question raised by Aristotle in his *Ethics*: What is the optimum number of friends one should have? The answer depends on the type of friendship involved. (1) Utilitarian: Some are necessary, but not too many. Life is too short for us to be obligated to return favors to a