

Twitter Thread by Visa's Vexing Vacillations



Visa's Vexing Vacillations
[@visakanv](#)



Several conversations with several friends - and also the story of my entire life - is getting me to crystalize some thoughts

The most valuable thing I know is how to make friends

The most powerful + valuable thing I can do is teach it to other people

The most important person you have to be friends with is yourself

Possibly the most important thing in a friendship- including one with yourself, or your spouse, or your child - is attention. Deep, focused, undivided, non-judgemental attention.

To really see + hear the other person, in a world where people constantly feel unseen & unheard



So: the most important thing about the most important thing in life is attention,

and in schools, IMO, we often screw up how we teach it.

If you use threats and coercion to force kids to “pay” attention...

...you set people up for dysfunctional relationships their whole life



becoming friends with yourself: <https://t.co/35UnodNImE>

Much of self-improvement, personal development, introspection, etc can quite simply be reframed as the art of socialising with yourself. Listen to yourself, pay close attention to yourself, don't interrupt yourself, be kind and supportive to yourself, be constructive in criticism

— Visal's Vexing Vacillations (@visakanv) [March 27, 2019](#)

making friends by correctly reading and responding to the implicit proposals in other people's utterances
<https://t.co/7kjmEMdXW8>

Every utterance (status, tweet, whatever) is a bit of an invitation, a bit of a proposal. Let's play this game. When strangers read the proposal accurately, and support the game, a shared understanding develops. You can make friends this way.

— Visal's Vexing Vacillations (@visakanv) [September 11, 2018](#)

give sincere compliments.

(fantastic side-benefit of this is that you also develop your taste in the process, and taste is *extremely* valuable)

<https://t.co/locuGZ5MMj>

I don't know if I ever specifically set out to learn this, but I've gotten pretty good at it over the years: I think giving people specific and sincere compliments is a pretty great skill to develop. It's the intersection of making people feel good + developing your taste

— Visal's Vexing Vacillations (@visakanv) [March 17, 2019](#)

gently, kindly and curiously ask people about their experiences

<https://t.co/1RdFHqYMDm>

What have you seen?

What surprised you?

What have you been wrong about?

What do you know now you didn't before?

What have you struggled with?

What has your relationship with X (food, money, parents, job, dating) been like?

This puts you in 0.1% and people will *love* you [pic.twitter.com/CmH88FeEmt](https://t.co/pic.twitter.com/CmH88FeEmt)

— Visal's Vexing Vacillations (@visakanv) [February 26, 2019](#)

but don't push too hard for the answers to any particular question – rather, be sensitive to the other person – their gestures, body language, expressions – and look for opportunities for excellent followups <https://t.co/UC8VTTazou>

The most powerful IRL interview/conversation/flirting skill isn't asking good questions nearly as much as asking good followup questions - it's being sensitive to interesting micro-reactions. When you ask a question and they respond "..." no, and you go "Why?" Etc

— Visal's Vexing Vacillations (@visakanv) [May 26, 2019](#)

putting together a list of threads about making friends here. Will probably eventually expand this into a series of blogposts: <https://t.co/CGhsQhefwp>

make friends – peopling and socializing

This list was initially further down the page, but I'm starting to realize that these might be some of the most valuable things that I've written. It's amazing to me how often I encounter smart, thoughtful people who tell me that they're lonely.

- the most valuable thing I know is how to make friends
- different people have different models of reality
- fridge light theory – a way of expressing the idea that people underestimate how much of everything they observe is conditional on *them* being the observer
 - dealing with the observer-bias problem