

# A Comparative Study of Friends and Buddies

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, I investigate the difference between *buddies* and *friends*, attempting to resolve not only the differences between the two types of people, but also the difference between the types of people who have buddies or friends. User surveys, as well as multiple potential definitions are presented.

**Keywords: Buddy, Friend, Posse, Sociology field work, randomness**

## 1. Introduction

Recently I was flying back to Madison, and someone said to me while I was waiting: "You going to Madison?" *No jackass, I just like waiting around in front of gates at airports.* Then he proceeded to say "I have some buddies who go to school up there."

Then I realized, I don't have buddies... I have a buddy list (on AIM) but no buddies. I have *friends*, and occasionally I have acquaintances, but never buddies. In this paper, I set out to find the following:

1. A definition for *buddy* and *friend*, showing the main difference
2. The difference between the type of people who are considered buddies and who is considered friends

3. The difference between the type of people who keep buddies and those who keep friends.

In order to carry out this research, I have conducted extensive interviews [1] in order to answer each of these questions. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next three sections attempt to answer each of the three above questions respectively. The final section summarizes the results and offers some advice for both those who keep and/or are friends and/or buddies as well as offers areas of future research.

## 2. A Formal Definition of Friends and Buddies

In this section, I will give several definitions of the terms, *friend* and *buddy*. The first definition is that of a friend. According to Answers.com [2] a friend is "someone you know, like, and trust." Interestingly enough, answers.com links the phrase *buddy* as a synonym of the term *friend*, and formally defines *buddy* as "a good friend; comrade." Since it is my intention to show that those who use the phrase "buddy" to be primarily slacker, drunken frat boys (Sections 3 and 4), I will ignore this irrelevant piece of data and concentrate on other, more relevant pieces of data. A further definition of the term *buddy* is "used as a form of familiar address, especially for a man or boy:

*Watch it, buddy.*" This implies a negative connotation towards the person being called "buddy."

In addition to web research, the question prompted me to hold a panel discussion [3] about the differences between the two phrases, as well as the types of people that fall into each category. After much debate, the general consensus of the panel discussion was that "a buddy is a person who you tolerate in your life but do not necessarily need or want. A buddy is likely to go into your wallet and take money to buy him/herself a beer." Meanwhile the agreed upon definition of a friend is "someone who you like, and enjoy having in your life. A friend would never take your money, but you would have no problem buying a beer for him/her, because you know that he/she would do the same for you."

From these above definitions, we can conclude that a friend is, a "likable person, who you enjoy and want to spend time with." A buddy is "a person that you can do without, and probably do not really want in your life." I will use these definitions throughout the remainder of this paper.

### **3. The Difference between a Friend and a Buddy**

In order to understand the type of person that is a friend or a buddy, recall the definitions of the two terms from Section 2. Additionally, Answers.com [2] states that the likely origin of the phrase "buddy" is an alteration of "brother." We all know that fraternities (the home of slacker,

drunken frat boys) consider themselves to be "brotherhoods" and fellow members are brothers.



Figure 1: A picture of a typical "buddy"

In a series of extensive field studies [4], I have tracked down and interviewed several people who are claimed to be buddies. Figure 1 shows a picture of a typical "buddy." The summary of my findings is that the typical buddy is in fact, nothing more than your everyday pot-smoking, slacker, business major, drunken frat boy. The type of person more likely to associate with the President of the US than a normal upstanding citizen.

Likewise, the field research [4] also sought out those people that are considered to be friends. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the "friends" were the exact opposite of those who are considered to be "buddies." The typical friend is an upstanding member of society, usually a scientist or engineer. The friend is an upstanding citizen who would be willing to do must anything to help out his or her fellow friends.

#### **4. The Type of People Who Keep Buddies or Friends**

According to Big Wally's Big Book of Big Clichés [5] "Birds of a Feather Flock Together." In the extensive field research of [4], I have found that with little exception, people who associate with "buddies" tend to act like a "buddy" themselves, Likewise, a person who associates with friends is in fact him or herself a friend.

#### **5. Conclusions, Discussions and Future Research**

In this paper, I have defined and shown the difference between "friends" and "buddies," as well as described the difference between the types of people that are and have either a buddy or a friend. From this research it is safe to conclude that having friends, and likewise being a friend is a good thing. If you are a friend or have a friend then you should be commended and hold your head high, you are truly what makes society great. However, it is also clear that having or being a "buddy" is bad. If you fall under these categories, then you should be shunned by society and should do everything within your power to change your habits, even if that means a total frontal lobotomy.

We have discussed two aspects of inter-human relationships: the friend and the buddy. This paper is by no

means a complete survey of all human relationships, as there are many potential avenues for future research. These can include (but are not limited to) an in depth study of chums, mates, colleague, associates, sidekick and amigo.

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#### **REFERENCES**

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- [5] Big Wally, "Big Wally's Big Book of Big Clichés." Not Real Publishers, New York, NY. 1878.