

relationships

ET TU, BRUTUS!

There are some friends you'd do well to avoid, finds SAVIA RAJAGOPAL

There's nothing better than having a real close gal-pal. But very often, many of us find ourselves surrounded by so-called 'friends' that really make no value addition to our lives. Rather, you'd be better off without them being a part of your life. Here's taking a look at those 'friends' that you'd better be wary of...

HIGH ON WHINE

You can identify this breed by their incessant non-stop natter that has the potential to drown you in inconsequential details on topics you frankly don't care about! Nothing is ever good enough and self-pity trips are quite common. Seema Hingorrany, clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, analyses such 'friends' as having a negative effect on you. "You have enough of your own stress, and then to handle someone else's becomes difficult. Boredom and monotony enter the friendship. A good friend should be able to listen to you instead of just obsessing about her own problems all the time. You tend to avoid such a friend subconsciously. But if things go beyond a limit, then sit and talk it out without being blunt or rude," advises Hingorrany.

COMPETITIVE STREAK

This particular kind of 'friend' will draw comparisons and make it a point to show you where you've goofed up. Make no mistake; she will try and rub her accomplishments in your face. Everything turns into an Olympiad where you find yourself taking part in a race where you never knew you were running! Says Dr. Shamsah Sonawala, consultant psychiatrist, Jaslok Hospital, "Negative competition stems from insecurity and envy, which could be materialistic competition or competing at work due to low self-esteem. If it's petty competition, then maybe you can ignore it and focus on her good qualities. If not, and there is bitterness and resentment involved, then you'd do well to steer clear from such a friend." However, Hingorrany warns that self-esteem and confidence can take a nose-dive as you tend to put your friend on a pedestal and constantly try to match up to her.

GOSSIP QUEEN

Everyone knows a gossip queen. She could be a nosey neighbour or the local busybody or just someone who seeks an occasion to show off her newly acquired piece of hot scandal! It's amazing how one tiny shred of news can get turned into a colossal news-breaking episode! And to whom do you credit this particular miracle?? Your 'friend', of course! Hingorrany elaborates further, "There is no trust in such a relationship and if you can't confide in a person uninhibitedly, then you're not really friends. If you feel it's worth it, you could try hinting gently about her behaviour. In extreme cases, you would do best to avoid such a person."

DOWN THE DRAIN

Don't we all know the kind of 'friend' who calls only when she's in trouble and needs advice? It's not rare that she asks you to advise her and while you dispel pearls of wisdom, which she appears to take in, you find out much later that she did the complete opposite. "You shouldn't completely avoid a person who seeks your advice as they probably feel connected to you at

some level. But this could be a one-sided relationship and if it's a regular feature, then you absolutely should not encourage such behaviour. You have two options here – help the person but know you won't get the same in return, or suggest that you are not capable enough to deal with the problem. You shouldn't get emotionally involved with their problem," advises Dr. Sonawala.

CLINGING

She sticks to your side as if she's an appendage. In fact, if she's not attached to your side, you may not recognise yourself anymore! This kind of dependency can be detrimental to both parties involved. Says Hingorrany, "Some people become too dependent on others, but you lose your own space in the bargain. This leads to feeling suffocated and smothered." However, Dr. Sonawala also adds that if it's a temporary feeling of being clingy due to divorce or death, then it's okay to support someone. But if it's a regular feature then, you should handle the situation with tact and greater sensitivity.

