

At Friendship Circle, we spark friendship, connection, and support for children of all abilities, their families, and Jewish teens. Of course, breathing life into this mission requires a special team of people operating in a unique culture. That culture is best defined by the **32 Friendship Ways** that follow. We call it ***the Friendship Way***.

32 FRIENDSHIP WAYS

- 1. DO THE RIGHT THING, ALWAYS.** Demonstrate an unwavering commitment to doing the right thing in every action you take and in every decision you make, especially when no one’s looking. Always tell the truth, no matter the consequences. If you make a mistake, own up to it, apologize, and make it right.
- 2. HAVE A BIAS FOR ACTION.** Work with a sense of urgency to get things done. While careful planning is important, nothing is more important than actually making programs happen. Don’t put off until tomorrow what can be completed today. Results have more impact than intentions.
- 3. CREATE A FEELING OF FRIENDLINESS AND WARMTH IN EVERY INTERACTION.** Every conversation, phone call, e-mail, letter, and even voicemail, sets a tone and creates an impression. Pay attention to every interaction and be sure you’re setting a tone that’s friendly, warm, and helpful.
- 4. THINK TEAM FIRST.** It’s not about you. Don’t let your ego or personal agenda get in the way of doing what’s best for the team. Be there for each other and be willing to step into another role or help a co-worker when that’s what’s required for success. Help each other to succeed.
- 5. LISTEN GENEROUSLY.** Listening is more than simply “not speaking.” Give others your undivided attention. Be present and engaged. Minimize the distractions and let go of the need to agree or disagree. Suspend your judgment and be curious to know more, rather than jumping to conclusions. Above all, listen to understand.
- 6. FIND A WAY.** Respond to every situation by looking for how we can help, rather than explaining why it can’t be done, even when that help may be outside our organization. Be resourceful and show initiative.
- 7. PRIORITIZE MORE HUMAN CONNECTION.** While emails and texts can be convenient tools, live phone calls and meetings allow us to create stronger connections and communicate more effectively. Whenever feasible, prioritize in-person communication.
- 8. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.** Show people you care about them as individuals, and not just as transactions. Pay attention to the things that make people unique. Use handwritten notes, personal cards, and timely phone calls to acknowledge their significance.
- 9. PRACTICE BLAMELESS PROBLEM-SOLVING.** Demonstrate a relentless solution focus, rather than pointing fingers or dwelling on problems. Identify lessons learned and use those lessons to improve ourselves and our processes so we don’t make the same mistake twice. Get smarter with every mistake. Learn from every experience.
- 10. SPEAK STRAIGHT.** Speak honestly in a way that helps to make progress. Say what you mean, and be willing to ask questions, share ideas, or raise issues that may cause conflict when it’s necessary for team success. Be courageous enough to say what needs to be said. Address issues directly with those who are involved or affected.
- 11. GET CLEAR ON EXPECTATIONS.** Create clarity and avoid misunderstandings by discussing expectations upfront. Set expectations for others and ask when you’re not clear on what they expect of you. End all meetings with clarity about action items, responsibilities, and due dates.
- 12. BE PROCESS-DRIVEN.** Create systems and processes that support our ability to perform with consistency. Strong processes are the foundation of organizational effectiveness and help prevent us from needing to “reinvent the wheel” each time. When possible, leverage the best practices created by others. At Friendship Circle we call this “Circle Systems.”
- 13. MAKE QUALITY PERSONAL.** Demonstrate a passion for excellence and take pride in the quality of everything you touch and everything you do. Have a healthy dislike for mediocrity. Good is not good enough. Always ask yourself, “Is this my best work?”
- 14. BE RESPONSIVE.** Respond to questions and concerns quickly, whether it’s in person, on the phone, or by e-mail. This includes simply acknowledging that we got the question and we’re “on it,” as well as keeping those involved continuously updated on the status of outstanding issues.
- 15. TAKE OWNERSHIP.** Take personal responsibility for making things happen. It’s never someone else’s job or someone else’s fault. Nothing is beneath any of us. If you see it, take care of it. See issues through to completion.
- 16. HONOR COMMITMENTS.** Do what you say you’re going to do, when you say you’re going to do it. This includes being on time for all phone calls, appointments, and meetings. If a commitment can’t be fulfilled, notify others early and agree on a new deliverable to be honored.
- 17. ASSUME POSITIVE INTENT.** Work from the assumption that people are good, fair, and honest, and that the intent behind their actions is positive. Set aside your own judgments and preconceived notions. Give people the benefit of the doubt.
- 18. TAKE INTELLIGENT RISKS.** Innovation, improvement, and success don’t come from playing it safe. They come from a thoughtful and intentional willingness to try the unconventional and to ask “What if?” Try a new way. Think differently.
- 19. WORK SMART.** Be organized and plan your work for maximum efficiency. Have all the tools necessary before starting your work. Have a game plan for your calls, your tasks, and your workday. Know the priorities and work on them first.
- 20. BE POSITIVE.** You have the power to choose your attitude. Choose to be joyful, optimistic, and enthusiastic. See the good in others. Your attitude is contagious. Spread optimism and positive energy. Use positive language. “Think good and it will be good.”
- 21. BE A LIFELONG LEARNER.** Seek out and take advantage of every opportunity to gain more knowledge, to increase your skills, and to become a greater expert. Be resourceful about learning and sharing best practices. Be teachable and have a growth mindset.
- 22. OWN YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE.** Own and protect your work-life balance. Know and communicate boundaries and when you need to take a break to refresh and recharge. To give your best, you must be at your best. Be a steward of our most valuable resource: you!
- 23. COLLABORATE.** Share information and work together. Collaborate internally and with our volunteers and partners to find better solutions. Collaboration generates better ideas than does working alone. Be inclusive.
- 24. TAKE PRIDE IN OUR APPEARANCE.** Your personal appearance makes a strong statement about the pride you take in your performance. Dress neatly and professionally. The appearance of our facilities makes a similar statement about the quality of our work. Take responsibility to see that our environment is clean, neat, and professional.
- 25. DEBATE, THEN ALIGN.** Healthy, vigorous debate creates better solutions. Debate concepts without making personal attacks. Check your ego and push for the best solution, rather than your solution. Once a decision is made, however, get fully aligned by putting your complete support behind it.
- 26. SHARE THE WHY.** Before others can understand what to do or how to do it, they must first understand why. Explain the big picture. The more people understand the reason for what we’re doing, the more actively they can participate in the solution.
- 27. CREATE WIN/WIN SOLUTIONS.** It’s a 2-way street. Learn to think from others’ perspective. Discover what they need and find a way to help them meet those needs while also fulfilling your own. Win/win solutions are always more effective and longer lasting than win/lose solutions.
- 28. LOOK AHEAD AND ANTICIPATE.** Be more effective by anticipating future issues, planning for contingencies, and addressing them in advance. This is especially true for activities we do repeatedly.
- 29. TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE FAMILY.** Our relationships go deeper than simply being teammates at work. We genuinely care for and about each other. Whether it’s a kind word during a tough stretch, a friendly smile each morning, or a helping hand in stressful times, show your compassion.
- 30. BE CURIOUS.** In the search for the best solutions, challenge and question what you don’t understand. Don’t accept anything at “face value” if it doesn’t make sense to you. Be curious, ask thoughtful questions, and listen intently to the answers. Dig deeper to go beyond the expected. Ask the extra question.
- 31. SHOW MEANINGFUL APPRECIATION.** Recognize people doing things right, rather than pointing out when they do things wrong. Regularly extend meaningful acknowledgment and appreciation — in all directions throughout our agency.
- 32. KEEP THINGS FUN.** While our passion for excellence is real, remember that the world has bigger problems than the daily challenges that make up our work. Stuff happens. Keep perspective. Don’t take things personally or take yourself too seriously. Laugh every day.