



Toxic Friendships: Knowing the Rules and Dealing with the Friends Who Break Them

By Suzanne Degges-White, Judy Pochel Van Tieghem

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Good friends and healthy friendships are crucial to women's well-being at every stage of life. But what happens when a friendship turns toxic? When a friend becomes hurtful or mistreats another? When a friend abandons another in a time of need? Here, Suzanne Degges-White and Judy Pochel Van Tieghem explore such toxic friendships and how women navigate the ups and downs, as well as how broken friendships can be mended and bad friendships ended.

Explaining and illustrating the "rules of friendship" at various stages of life, the authors reveal what it takes to be a good friend, how to identify bad friends, and how to move forward when friendships turn sour. Vignettes of toxic friendship behaviors are shared, as well as tips on how best to respond to these rule-breaking friends in order to rebuild damaged relationships and repair a friendship's foundation (when appropriate) and how to decide when it's time to let go of a relationship that is bringing you down versus keeping you afloat. Information for parents is also provided, to aid them as they help their daughters navigate their friendships.

We all need friends, but knowing when and how to let go can help us all be better friends--to ourselves, and also to others.

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Editorial Review

Review

In their enormously helpful and nuanced book, *Toxic Friendships*, Suzanne Degges-White and Judy Pochel Van Tieghem go way beyond "mean girl" and "frenemy" stereotypes to elucidate the unspoken rules of friendship and lay out how we can effectively manage the inevitable hurt and disappointment that comes with vitally important social connections. The authors' exploration of potentially toxic friendship environments, such as the office and children's athletic teams, further enriches the reader's understanding of friendship's many complications.

Carlin Flora, author of *Friendfluence*

As a professional who works with friends and knows the value of friendships to my mental health, I have experienced the pain of mending and ending friendships. I wish I read *Toxic Friendships* years ago so I could have better navigated these relationships for both my sanity and success. This book is a must read for women regardless of age and stage of life.

-- Marcia Reynolds, PsyD, author of *Wander Woman* and *The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversations into Breakthroughs*

This book is intended as a kind of field guide to 'toxic' relationships of various kinds, but especially friendships among women. . . . Degges-White is a therapist as well as a professor of counseling. She has had many years of experience helping women who are trying to understand and/or extricate themselves from damaging relationships. Van Tieghem is a professional freelance writer. The authors first lay out why people need relationships and then propose ten 'cross-cultural' rules for maintaining healthy adult relationships and ten rules for parents who must help their children successfully navigate their own worlds of friendship. Basing their suggestions and conclusions on 'shared stories of composite clients' and other women contacted via a survey, the authors then take readers on a guided tour of familiar environments that are particularly prone to being toxic (e.g., the soccer field). In the last section of the book, the authors offer advice on how to gracefully bail out of a toxic relationship and how to use the rules of relationships to build healthy friendships while keeping one's integrity and sense of self intact. Summing Up: Recommended. All readers. (CHOICE)

Toxic Friendships: Knowing the Rules and Dealing with the Friends Who Break Them is a comprehensive, detailed and personal guidebook for tackling problematic friendships, helping us learn how to become better friends and just why it's so crucial that we do so. (Andrea Bonior, Ph.D., www.thefriendshipfix.com)

In their enormously helpful and nuanced book, *Toxic Friendships*, Suzanne Degges-White and Judy Pochel Van Tieghem go way beyond "mean girl" and "frenemy" stereotypes to elucidate the unspoken rules of friendship and lay out how we can effectively manage the inevitable hurt and disappointment that comes with vitally important social connections. The authors' exploration of potentially toxic friendship environments, such as the office and children's athletic teams, further enriches the reader's understanding of friendship's many complications. (Carlin Flora, author of *Friendfluence: The Surprising Ways Friends Make Us Who We Are*)

As a professional who works with friends and knows the value of friendships to my mental health, I have experienced the pain of mending and ending friendships. I wish I read *Toxic Friendships* years ago so I could

have better navigated these relationships for both my sanity and success. This book is a must read for women regardless of age and stage of life. (Marcia Reynolds, PsyD, author of *Wander Woman* and *The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversations into Breakthroughs*)

From the Inside Flap

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About the Author

Suzanne Degges-White, PhD, LPC, LMHC, NCC, is professor and chair of the Department of Counseling, Adult and Higher Education at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. She is a licensed counselor and her research interests include intimate relationships (including friendship and motherhood). She is the author of *Friends Forever: How Girls and Women Forge Lasting Relationships* and *Mothers and Daughters: Living, Loving, and Learning over a Lifetime*. She is a featured blogger on the Psychology Today website and has edited four books on counseling in the community and in schools.

Judy Pochel Van Tieghem has over three decades of experience in reporting, writing, and researching for various publications. She was awarded the Illinois Associated Press Spot News Reporter of the Year honor in 1984 and was a winner of the Kenan Business Fellowship, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1990. She currently resides in the Chicago suburban area, where she works as a freelance reporter.

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