Name: Course:

How many friends should you have?

People often say that while money may bring wealth, friends bring riches. New research, however, shows that friends may bring both kinds of riches. An American study asked eighteen-year-olds to list their three best friends. Years later, it was discovered that those named most often tended to be earning the most. In fact, every extra friend added two percent to their salary. The researchers believed that this is because people with better social skills do better in the workplace. So, the more friends the better?

One theory states that we all have about 150 friends. This may sound like a lot, but only about five of those are really close friends, the kind you can ring at 4:00 a.m. About another ten are part of an inner group, and these can include family members. Then there are about thirty-five not so close friends, and the other 100 are really just acquaintances. Susie, a market researcher, agrees: 'I have loads of friends, but I'm studying as well as working at the moment, so I only see a few friends once a week or so.'

Have social networking websites changed this? Facebook™, one of the most popular social networking sites, has more than 300 million active users worldwide, all making new friends online. The average number of Facebook friends is 130, but many people have hundreds or even thousands of online friends. Paulo, a graphic designer, thinks he is fairly typical of his generation: 'I have more than 700 Facebook friends, many of them from other countries. It is as easy nowadays to have a friend on the other side of the world as one round the corner.' However, research indicates that while some people may have more than 150 friends, the number of close friends remains exactly the same – about five.

It appears that whatever technology may make possible, human beings can only manage a small number of 'true' friends.



1- Are the statements true (T) or false (F)?

1- People who have more friends usually earn more money. T ☐ F ☐

2- Most people have about 150 friends. T ☐ F ☐

3- The average number of online friends on Facebook is 700. T ☐ F ☐

4- Most people only have one or two close friends. T ☐ F ☐

2- Read the article again and answer the questions.

1- According to the American study, how much was each friend 'worth'?

2- Why did the researchers believe that more popular children earned more as adults?

3- How many of the 150 friends mentioned are really acquaintances?

4- How many people use Facebook worldwide?

5- What is the writer's opinion about the effect of technology on how many close friends we have?

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3- Read the comments below from a website. Which opinions you agree or disagree with? Why?

I would never accept an online 'friend' who I didn't already know. How can you be friends with someone you've never met?
Sylwia, UK

I'm reading this at work - its's lunchbreak - and I wanted to comment about the fact that most companies won't let you go on Facebook while you're at work, even in your own time. I don't think it's fair because this is the main way I communicate with my friends.
Jon, UK

I think people who have hundreds of friends online must just be really self-obsessed and looking for attention
Rui, Portugal



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