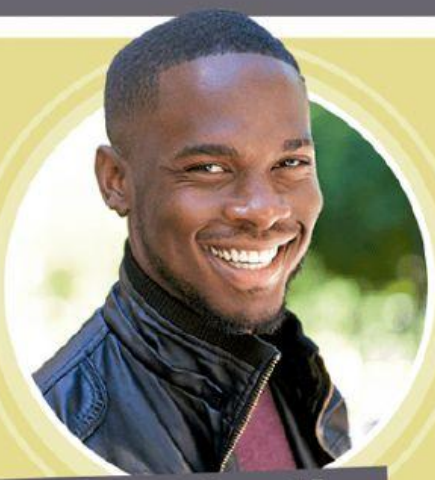
UNIT 4 B

READING SKILLS

Friends and colleagues:
essential tips for getting along



1 Martin

Sometimes we come up against problems that we can't work out on our own. Well, "A problem shared is a problem halved," as some of my British friends like to say. So whether I'm with a new acquaintance or an old friend, I always take the opportunity to give the person a hand if I can. The best kind of help is a favor you do for someone with no expectation of a favor in return. Doing people favors not only gives you a warm feeling inside, but it also sends the message that you can be trusted because you have that person's welfare in mind. If I were you, I'd offer help whenever I can because, as we say, "One good turn deserves another." You never know, your generosity may be repaid one day when you most need help from someone else. After all, "No man is an island."

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The other day, I was in a face-to-face meeting with a colleague, and she'd sent three texts before I could even finish what I was saying. It drives me crazy when people don't listen, especially when they don't even look you in the eye. I was brought up to listen to people in order to understand them, not just in order to reply to them. If you really listen, you'll find it makes a big difference in understanding what motivates them, what worries them, and what they're enthusiastic about. You just have to ignore everyone around you, ignore your phone, and ignore that voice in your head that's thinking about how to respond. In no time, you'll find yourself connecting with people significantly better than before.

2 Magda

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3 Nandeep

Are you familiar with the expression "six degrees of separation"? It's the theory that every person on the planet is connected to everyone else by a chain of no more than five personal connections. I'm not sure it's completely true, but there's definitely an element of truth in it. So when you meet someone new, find out about the person: ask where he/she is from, where he/she went to school, and where he/she works. You may well find that you have a mutual friend. Try comparing interests, too – if you're both sports fans, this is a great way to connect. I'm into bike riding, and I often connect with others using a cycling app called Strava. Similarly, if you both like similar music, share playlists via Spotify. For business contacts, why not send a message or share an article on LinkedIn? We live in a connected world, and you just have to find the connections.

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Do you ever find yourself having a conversation, hearing someone say something pretty shocking, and wondering why on earth the person just said that? I do, and when it happens, I try to keep in mind where he or she is coming from. I'll ask myself something like, "Why does the person feel that way? Why is he or she saying that?" Obviously, you're allowed your own opinion, and you're not obliged to agree with everything someone says, but don't argue for the sake of it – that just causes friction. Try not to criticize or prove the other person wrong. Everyone is different, and if you want to get along with people, remember that someone else's experience isn't necessarily the same as yours. Try putting yourself in the other person's shoes.

4 Angela

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5 Kazuo

Having a laugh is essential, and I find humor is a great way to break the ice, ease tension, and get along with people. You can't force humor, though – in other words, you can't just switch on your funny side. Otherwise it might come out as awkward, and you could risk upsetting people, which you have to be very careful about. Humor is best when it comes from a laid-back and spontaneous place. I'd also be careful about what or who you make fun of because so much humor is based on being unkind to others. If you wanted to ruin a friendship, an ill-considered comment (humorous or not!) would be the perfect way to go about it. The safest way to enjoy humor is to make fun of yourself. And I don't recommend telling jokes: jokes are not the same as a sense of humor, and it's very hard to tell them well. If people wanted to hear a good joke, they'd go to a comedy club.

Skill identifying attitude

When reading a text, try to figure out the writer's attitude towards the topic. Attitude is not always explicitly stated, so try to understand the details of the text first, and then consider how the writer feels about the topic in general.

- Look for language that expresses opinions and feelings, which is often more explicitly stated than attitude.
- If there are questions with the text, look for key words in the questions and find synonyms for these in the text. Then read that part of the text in detail.

A Read the Skill box. Then match questions a–f below with paragraphs 1–5. There is one question that you don't need.

Which person:

a believes in seeing things from other people's perspectives? _____
b feels we need to avoid offending people? _____
c feels people don't take friendship seriously enough? _____
d thinks everyone appreciates a little assistance from time to time? _____
e recommends paying close attention to what people are saying? _____
f likes finding things in common with others? _____

Text builder **conditionals for advice and suggestions**

Zero conditional:
*If you're both sports fans, this **is** a great way to connect.*

First conditional:
*People **will recall** a conversation as being more interesting if you **ask** questions.*

Second conditional:
*If you **wanted** to ruin a friendship, an ill-advised comment **would be** the perfect way to go about it.*

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in parentheses. Scan the text and check.

1 If you really listen, you _____ (find) it makes a big difference.
2 If you _____ (want) to get along with people, remember that ...
3 If I were you, I _____ (offer) help whenever I can.
4 If you both like similar music, _____ (share) playlists.
5 If people _____ (want) to hear a good joke, they'd go to a comedy club.

Read the Text builder. Which types of conditional are the sentences in exercise 4?