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# The Ancient Greek Philosophers' Account and Perspective of Friendship

## Abstract

Ancient Greek philosophers were very crucial in the elucidation of friendship from a philosophical point of view. The paper, therefore, seeks to describe and attenuate different personal accounts that inspired the philosophers' point of view on friendship. The philosophers through their reports and observations of their current societies made conclusions that have been used to develop the outcomes of friendship. Throughout the paper, a detailed approach will provide the main assumptions and theories that were made by the philosophers studied. The article includes the personalized accounts of Aristotle, Augustine, and Socrates. The three philosophers were instrumental in describing how they viewed friendship and the meaning they placed on their associations with their friends. Each of the philosophers is illustrated in accordance with their published works and opinions. The paper, therefore, conclusively provides their approaches towards friendship. Nevertheless, it further determines the factors that led to the allusion by the selected philosophers.

## Philosophers

Friendship has been a subject for many philosophers throughout history. These philosophes have used their status in society to develop theories on the various forms and outcomes of friendship. One of the major contributors to these philosophies is Aristotle. Aristotle, as a philosopher was very vocal on issues regarding structures and consequences of associations. According to Aristotle, the friendships he endured only took him so far. In his opinion, the friends he had were influenced by the gains they each had for each other. He postulates that most of the time he felt alone, yet he had friends. The 2500-year-old works by Aristotle further continue to shed light in Aristotle's ideologies on friendships. In his works, he proposed that associations existed through "goodwill" of the people involved (Vernon, 2011). The relationship was dependent on the need to reciprocate the "goodwill" to the other individual. Furthermore, he postulated that the desire to form friendship came "quickly" while friendship did not. Aristotle continued to categorize different forms of intimacy that people formed. One group was friends because they each had utility for each other, the second is because they enjoyed each other's company while the third was based on love and were into each other's character and innate depth.

Socrates, on the other hand, concluded that at the end of his research and works, he did not

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seem entirely able to discover the true meaning of friendship. In his line of thought, he was afraid of making commitments with his friends. However, despite his acclaimed attitude of not understanding the values of friendship, he was well aware of sexual satisfaction that formed an association with people. According to him, there was an unbreakable bond between sexuality and friendship. Just like Aristotle, Socrates, through his famous “speech of Socrates” he portrayed people into three different categories that envisioned the critical perspectives that formed the outcomes of friendships (Vernon, 2011). In his opinion, he was unable to understand the values of friendship, but he desired a “true friend” more than anything else. His doubts of ever finding a friend are because of he thinks his life as philosopher places him at a disadvantage. On the contrary, he later concluded that it was not his life as a philosopher that hindered him from acquitting friends, it his high value for honesty for anyone who was to be his “true friend” (Nichols, 2010).

Augustine, unlike Socrates, had friends some of whom were his “best” friends. However, he interpreted his through Greek philosophy that interpreted friendship in light of Athens livelihood. In his quest of maintaining friendships, Augustine, just like his counterparts kept various lovers for their “sensual indulgence.” On the contrary, he always feared that he might lose his interactions with them due to his perceived intelligence. The concern, in his line of thinking, can be understood since he later lost his friend in a fever calamity (Vessey, 2015). Additionally, he encapsulates friendship with religion after the death of his friend. Accordingly, he loses faith in religion blames religion for causing his pain with the association. He alludes that in public people were friendly, but in their private lives, they were empty and void. As he continued to understand friendship and the role of religion, he postulates that they shared a divine connection with his friends (Vernon, 2011). Conclusively, Augustine never recovers his faith in friendship and profoundly believes that friendship for him will never be the same again.

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