



JOHN MELNICK

**Stay With Your  
"STARS"**



**Greetings!**

My friend Piper and I send our best wishes to you and hope your summer is starting out well.

This spring, I competed in the Toastmasters International Speech Contest. I was fortunate to win at the Club Level, Area level and place second at the Division level. My speech was entitled, *Stay With Your STARS*. I encourage all people to identify their STARS relationships and spend as much time as you can, working on them. Much of your happiness and successes comes from positive relationships.

What is a "STARS" relationship? Here is how I define it:

**S - Sincerity** - This is basic. Both persons must be sincere about the friendship.

**T - Truthful** - Meaning, you are truthful with each other. You do not "sugar coat" things. I would rather my friends be truthful, even if it initially hurts to hear what they say. The best way to grow is to hear the truth. You are then dealing with reality. And dealing with reality is critical to good mental health; that is a fact.

**A - Acrobatic** - The relationship must be "Acrobatic," meaning that it can climb and/or leap over hurdles, especially unforeseen significant ones.

I have become a very different person since 2012. That is when I went through a severe depression. I have changed a lot, and not everyone I thought was my friend could handle that.

My true friends have stuck with me because those were the relationships that were "Acrobatic." I am thankful for all of them.

**R - Resilient** - Relationships will ebb and flow. The best ones are resilient and always seem to bounce back - often when you need them the most. You run into a problem; you get over it.

**S - Silly** - With true friends you can be silly. Joking is tremendously healthy. In fact, I encourage you to be silly more often. It has a way of lightening things up and releasing healthy endorphins into your system to make you feel happy and relaxed.

I face a constant battle with the threat of depression. Using the STARS strategy with my relationships has helped me keep in touch with friends who are good for me. Whether or not you struggle with depression, using my STARS strategy makes good sense.

Piper and I wish you all a good summer. I encourage you to think about your STARS, and who they might be. Spend more time with them. It is a good idea to tell these people they are your STARS. They deserve to know, don't you think?



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