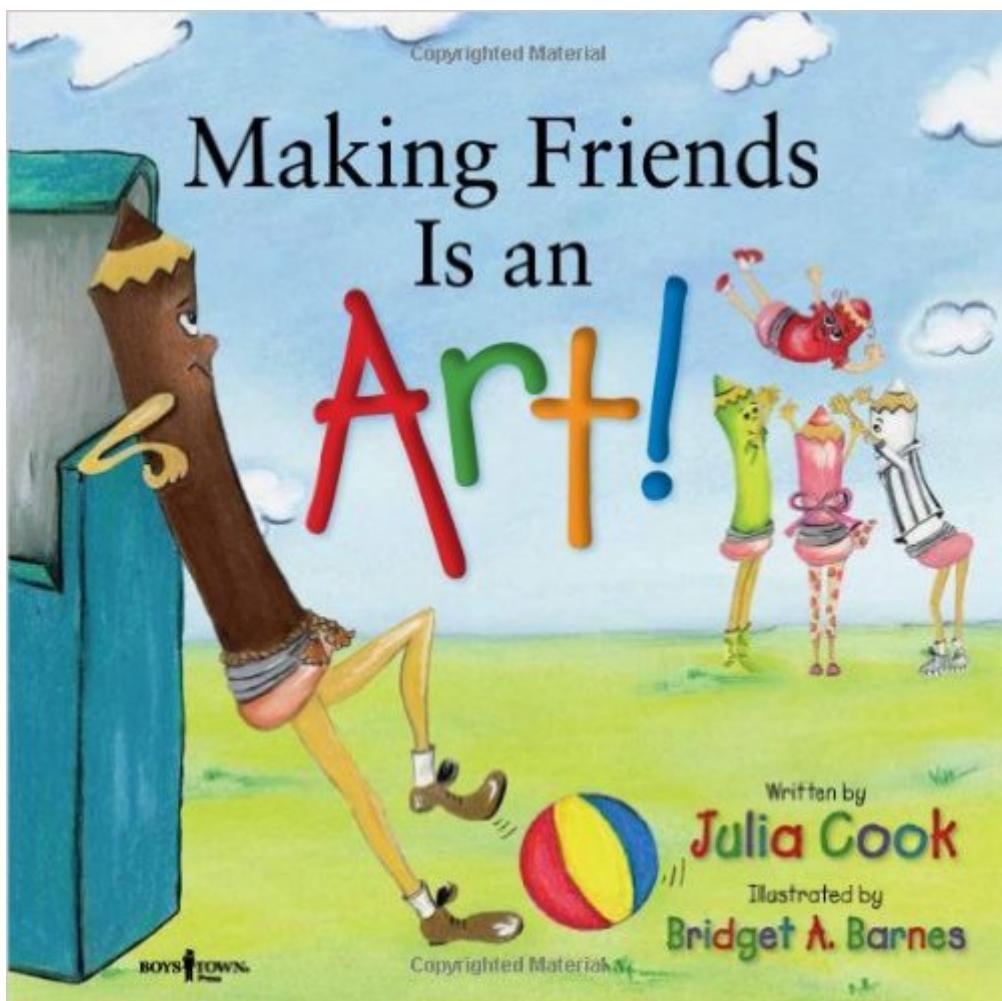


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# Making Friends Is An Art!



## **Synopsis**

Meet Brown the least used pencil in the box. He's tall, geeky and lonely. Brown envies Red, Purple, Blue and all the other pencils who have fun coloring and playing together. Dark Green is trustworthy, Pink listens well, Orange has fun, and everybody likes Red! Brown doesn't smile very often because he doesn't get used much and hardly ever needs sharpening. When Brown asks the other pencils why no one likes him, he discovers that to have friends, he needs to be a good friend. If Brown learns to use all of the friendship skills the other pencils have, he can make friends and have fun too! In her trademark humorous fashion, author Julia Cook teaches kids of all ages (and adults too!) how to practice the art of friendship and getting along with others. This title is the first in a Building Relationships series of books focusing on relationship-building skills for children. Included in the book are tips for parents and teachers on how to help children who feel left out and have trouble making friends.

## **Book Information**

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (99 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## **Customer Reviews**

I usually don't purchase new books without seeing reviews but I immediately bought this one and I wasn't disappointed. Julia Cook's books have been useful. As an elementary school counselor I'm always searching for books on friendship. There don't seem to be many out there on how to make friends and what to do if you have friendship problems. Although I also recommend "How to be a friend" by Marc Brown and "My friends and me" by Pat Thomas. I look for books that will appeal to

6-8 year olds. I've already used this book with groups and it's worked out well. So for the plot: The Brown colored pencil feels alone and left out. A few of the other colored pencils tell him he needs to be a good friend to make friends. Each of the colors has a specific positive quality. Brown is a combination of all the other colors so he has those qualities within him. He takes their advice and begins to recognize his own strengths. He changes his ways and does things to try and help out the other pencils. He feels better about himself and now has friends. The story did repeat some things to try and make the story hit home but I'm not sure it was necessary. A couple of pages almost felt out of place and were a little too long. For instance, towards the end Brown listens to a presentation on how to take over the art supply market. He was doing this to support his friend but I don't think the audience this is geared to would understand the situation, nor did it add to the story. Overall, the book has a good message that resonates with children. It is easy to use in discussion regarding friendship and self esteem and I would buy it again.

I bought this for my 5 year old. He has some issues with empathy and thinking about other people, so I'm concerned that he is going to have trouble making real friends in school. He does NOT have any issues with self esteem, if anything he has the opposite problem. I thought this was a book about how to make friends. But really, it's a book on why friends are important and that you are special and deserve to have friends. The book is very very wordy. There are a couple of entire pages that could easily be removed from the book without affecting the storyline. It's just too long for young children. Also, there's no real practical information. The first half of the book covers how the brown crayon doesn't have any friends and basically hates himself. Then by talking to a bunch of other crayons, he discovers that he is worthwhile after all, and he starts to make friends. But I didn't feel there were enough details in actually helping a young child make friends. One of the themes was "to make friends you need to be a good friend", which is awesome! but the examples and guidance were terrible. There are extremely specific examples - like the brown crayon listens to another crayon's crazy business plans. My son is too young to understand that this is trying to say that you should think of others and listen, even if you aren't super-interested. Honestly I would have been better off just making a list of friend-making skills and reading them to him and giving him some general examples. I actually felt that improving your self esteem was discussed more than making friends. Accepting who you are and learning to like yourself were major themes. If that's what you are looking for - I still can't hardly recommend this book because I feel it is too long unless your child is a bit older, in which case they might find the characters too childish. 3 stars is listed as "It's ok" and that's exactly how I would describe this book.

I've shared the book with several children of various ages. Best received by 8 yr olds & up when reading all of the words as it is QUITE WORDY. Editing the words to make the content more brief & focusing on the pictures helped 5-7 yr olds have some understanding. I found one of the most exciting parts was the ability to extend bibliotherapy into an expressive art intervention - helped the kids to visually see, internalize the concepts & hopefully retain information longer!

I'm a elementary school counselor and have read this book to 1st - 3rd graders. I'm in a predominately white school with very few "brown" students. In one class I had a "brown" girl start crying. Even though everyone likes the brown crayon in the end, she was still heart-broken because of the rest of the book. I definitely agree with the previous review that a neutral color should have been chosen. Also, the book is VERY long so I edit what I read to students. I have many of Julia Cook's books, and find most of them are too long, but they have good messages sometimes.

Wow, this is a great story but I wonder if the author thought about how brown or dark skinned kids might feel about this book? Think for a moment of how the story would have been perceived if the color white were chosen instead? First, I use brown way more than I ever use white so white is generally an even lesser used color than brown, for very obvious reasons -- white doesn't show up up on the most commonly used color of paper, which is white! I think I would have avoided using any color that aligns with skin color altogether, though. There are no people that are green or purple or blue so one of those would have been a safer color to go with. Of course, using one of those colors (green, purple, blue) would change the "little used color" thread of the story, I guess. I am not African-American but my son is and I am glad I read this book first before sharing it with him. It worries me to think what message he would have taken away from this, however subtle or unintentional, the message is: brown is not a very desirable color to be. Not the best message to be sending kids of color.

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