What do your friends like about you?

I have always been interested in science and engineering, and have many friends who share these same interests. We compare ideas on the newest technology and assist one another with our own projects. These friends like me not only because of my aptitude for science, but also because of my organizational abilities and my willingness to help. ¶ One main reason I get along with my friends so well is that I am involved in a diverse range of science activities. Academically, from courses at school and summer programs, I have gotten a wide background. This base of information is useful for discussing ideas in fields I have less experience with. I also have a great versatility with technique. Dealing totally in abstraction, my friends and I will often discuss theory and new developments in many fields, with their implications on science and technology as a whole. Abstraction is important because it allows me to practice communicating ideas and opinions in a clear manner. I have also learned the application of theory, and I have built many science projects, both by myself and with others. Just as important to solving practical problems, my mechanical ability lets me handle equipment, whether the problem is a broken alarm system, a glitch in a program, or something simple like installing a track light. My diversity of technique gives me a wide knowledge base and many ways of applying my skills to practical problems. ¶ One common element of all my pursuits is creativity. By looking at problems in new ways, I can discover unusual but useful solutions. I'm always inventing projects to build totally new devices, and improve existing ones. At the same time, I enjoy assisting others. Even when I know little about the subject I have often helped my friends with assignments, by offering suggestions after a quick explanation of the concepts involved. Science has many diverse fields, and being able to discuss any of them is extremely useful. Of course, my ability to intuit solutions helps outside of academics as well, and I love to assist people with their own extracurricular projects. ¶ Being able to create ideas does not always ensure the capability to apply them, however. Actually producing a useful product involves many qualities: persistence, to finish one idea even if difficulties are encountered; competence and efficiency, to best implement solutions; and thoroughness, to ensure the quality of the end result. One physical application in hardware I have designed was a device to keep light levels constant in a given area by varying the brightness of a bulb against natural light, like a thermostat varies heat against temperature. I also created a light switch which automatically turned on lights when there was someone in the room. This was accomplished by using two infra-red beams planted in a doorway, which by monitoring the order in which they were broken, it was possible to tell whether people were entering or leaving the room. Also, to enable students to perform the calculations for more complex laboratory experiments, I wrote some easy-to-use programs that interpreted data for the chemistry department. And on my own computer, I have designed a system that allows me to mathematically create three dimensional images, with the standard red and blue cellophane glasses technique used for movies. ¶ I have always had an active personality, and pride myself on being efficient and reliable. These qualities combined with leadership and persistence enable me to coordinate projects involving many people. For example, the Brown University mainframe is usually accessed from Apple Macintosh computers via a telecommunications program. When I first used this system, I found it extremely awkward and potentially confusing, especially for someone with simple needs like electronic mail. My solution was to make a program for the Macintosh which was simply a graphic shell which issued text equivalents of the chosen commands. Thus, a user could take advantage of the simple window environment of the Macintosh to communicate with the powerful mainframe. While relatively simple to program, this project is extremely long. To make the program complete, many layers of commands and functions must be included. This requires a very thorough knowledge of all the mainframe functions and the time to incorporate them into the code. I excited my friends with this idea and now have four other programmers assisting me. By coordinating our efforts, I effectively enabled us to accomplish a project which for an individual would be almost impossible. ¶ My science oriented friends like knowing me because I have a flair for the things that interest them, while I can still participate in conversations about other subjects. I am good in many fields of science, and am glad to assist others with their problems, as well as accept advice from them. My efficiency and leadership abilities allow me to actually get people organized towards one common goal, and still achieve results in the face of delays that might normally keep projects in the "what if" stage.

Many of the people I spend time with have special talents in areas like art, literature, and political science. You can often find us debating moral issues and exchanging opinions late at night on these subjects. Even though I am pursuing engineering, I can still relate to their interests. ¶ One main reason I get along with my friends so well is that I am involved in a diverse range of science activities. Academically, from courses at school and summer programs, I have gotten a wide background. This base of information is useful for discussing ideas in fields I have less experience with. I also have a great versatility with technique. Dealing totally in abstraction, my friends and I will often discuss theory and new developments in many fields, with their implications on science and technology as a whole. Abstraction is important because it allows me to practice communicating ideas and opinions in a clear manner. 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