

Connection

A place where you are known, loved and embraced.

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The Why + The What

We long for it because we were created for it. From the Bible to medical research, it all points back to an innate need to have connection with others.

We can get in our own way of connecting with others. We fear that if others see us – *truly see us* – if they know our ugly, that they too would know we weren't worth their time, and certainly not worth their friendship.

When we buy into these lies, vulnerability will never happen.

We won't take the time or take the risk.

Society currently breeds disconnect and isolation. These platforms (social media) are inauthentic, edited forms of communication. They tell us that we can only showcase our “best selves”, our “best lives.”

Society tells us that we must assess, acclimate, acquiesce, and assimilate if we want to fit in, be a part. That who we are, as we are, is not enough to be accepted, embraced, valued or loved.

Brene Brown is currently leading the conversation on challenging these messages and these ideas. She highlights that *belonging is the opposite of fitting in*, because in true belonging you are true to who are.

We have to take a critical look inside, look at who we are created to be, and commit to being her bravely! Being us takes courage! It takes time! It takes being present! And it will always require vulnerability.

The How + The Who

Characteristics of a Connected Relationship...

1. **Safe:** Creating and maintaining safety needs to be top priority as you seek to establish a deep, intimate friendship.
2. **Content:** Treasure what makes you different, not threatened - refusing to compete - not always trying to change who you are.
3. **Tender:** Gentle with one another's hearts - sensitive to your hurts.
4. **Enduring:** United by more than just the things that are similar in your lives - sameness doesn't = oneness or connection.
5. **Accountability:** Willing to call you out when it's needed, bringing out the best in you.
6. **Available:** Know when they are needed - connected relationships are messy and inconvenient, but worth every bit of it!

Characteristics of a Destructive Friendship...

1. **Controlling:** It has to be their way or no way!
2. **Needy/Insecure:** You are needed for everything! Can't make a decision or really function without your input, support or approval.
3. **Carbon Copy:** They model their life after yours - everything you do, they have to do also.
4. **Unsafe:** They refuse to hold what you share confidential. They talk about you & others more than they talk about themselves.
5. **Self-Absorbed:** What is going on in their life is more important than what's going on in yours.
6. **Critical/Belittling:** They criticize, belittle, and put down.

Discussion Questions

1. Share a time when a faithful friend made a difference in your life.
2. What qualities of a connected friend are you best at exhibiting?