

Jennie Allen

New York Times bestselling author
of *Get Out of Your Head*

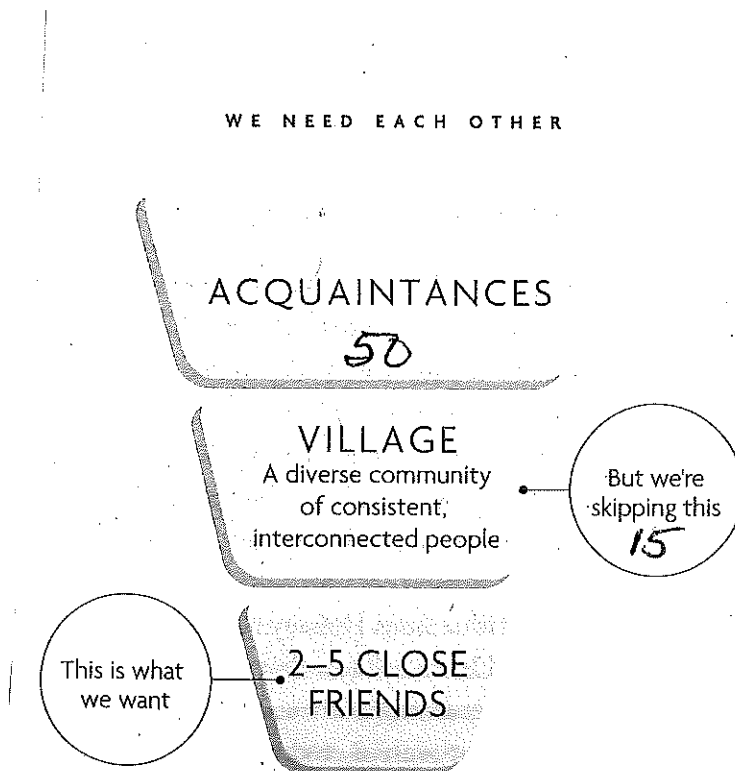
FIND
YOUR
PEOPLE

Building Deep Community
in a Lonely World

Part 1 We Need Each Other

Chapter 1 There Is Another Way

- Do You, believe you were built for true radical connection?
- Genesis 2:7
- Genesis 2:18; 20-25
- We were hardwired by God for relationship
- Deep authentic connections is the one thing our souls crave the most.
- The author makes 2 points out 2 things
 - **People make up the best part of our lives**
 - **People make up the most painful parts of our lives.**
- Connections cost....Are you willing to pay?
- Community should be the way we live.



- Time our best asset when it comes to building deep community.
- Now, let's take some time to think about people's interactions have changed over time; How has it changed in your family, friends, neighborhood, etc.?
- We live guarded lives!!
- Outside of Jesus, relationships are the greatest gifts we have on earth and simultaneously the most difficult part of being alive.

Chapter 2 The Connection We Crave

Why we deep crave intimate relationships

- Genesis 1:26-27
- God created us out of relationship for relationship
- Relational. It's who we are, because God is.
- We were not built for community; We were built because of it.
- Ecclesiastes 3:11
- Who is in the center of your Identity.
- God desires community for us
- When we have God in the right place – at the center of all our affections; We will likely get people right.
- Our togetherness matters to God.
- The Bible was written in the context of people daily living interconnected lives. The Bible was written for people living out their faith together.
- The enemy hates community. John 10:10

Chapter 3 A Vision For Something More

- What if that intimate circle we're craving is actually found in the wider network of the village that we've been missing?
- How do I make friends?
- How can I belong to an intimate community of people.
- Needing each other is not weakness but strength.
- The more resources a person gets, the more walls he or she puts up. And the more lonely they become.

5 Realities In The Garden Of Eden

1. **Proximity**- They enjoyed physical closeness to each other and God.
 2. **Transparency** – They were naked and unashamed, fully known and fully loved.
 3. **Accountability** – They lived under submission to God and each other.
 4. **Shared Purpose** – They were given a clear calling to care for creation.
 5. **Consistency** – They couldn't quit each other. They needed each other and shared everything together.
- These five "Tastes Of Heaven" provide the framework for how we build health community in our lives today.

Chapter 4 Finding Your People

- Will take deliberate intention to return to the kinds of relationships that God had in mind for us to enjoy.
- Our model for a life of Community – Eph. 2:1-2



FIRE

Goal: Proximity
Barrier: Busyness



OPEN DOORS

Goal: Transparency
Barrier: Pain/Shame



ANVIL

Goal: Accountability
Barrier: Pride



SHOVEL

Goal: Shared Purpose
Barrier: Shallow/Small Talk



TABLE

Goal: Consistency
Barrier: Conflict

- Who is your inner circle?
- Availability – Look for people who are also looking... who say yes!
- Humility – Look for people willing to say hard things and receive hard things.
- Transparency – Look for someone who refuses to hide.
- PRAY – For this – We can't have what we aren't willing to become



I REACH OUT, BUT PEOPLE
CAN'T COME OVER. THEY
ARE TOO BUSY. I FINALLY
STOPPED ASKING. -AMANDA

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
TAKES A LOT OF TIME AND
ENERGY THAT I DON'T
HAVE MUCH LEFT OF.

-JENN

I MOVED AWAY FROM
MY PEOPLE FOR A
BETTER JOB, AND I MISS
THEM SO MUCH. -CAIT

WORKING FULL TIME AND
BEING IN A NEW CITY AND
AT A LARGE CHURCH, IT IS
HARD TO CULTIVATE DEEP
FRIENDSHIPS. -AMY

I TRY TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH
MY FRIENDS, BUT HONESTLY,
THEY'RE TOO CAUGHT UP IN
THEIR OWN LIVES TO TAKE
MUCH OF AN INTEREST

IN MINE. -BRI

BETWEEN WORKING FORTY-PLUS
HOURS, TAKING CARE OF A HOUSE,
COMMUTING, FAMILY, HUSBAND,
THERE IS JUST NOT MUCH TIME
LEFT. IN THAT LITTLE TIME
I DO CARVE OUT FOR A FRIEND,
IT IS REALLY HARD TO TAKE THAT
FRIENDSHIP PAST SUPERFICIAL
CONVERSATION INTO DEEP
CONVERSATIONS. -SARA R.

Part 2 The Path To Connection

Chapter 5 Close

Fire: Goal: Proximity

Barrier: busyness

- Fire brings us together. Real life, face to face, no phones, together. We were not created to live alone.
- Your people are closer than you think
- Friendships should arise out of your everyday places and everyday activities.
- Proximity is the starting place for intimacy, we all need a network of regular people who are present in our lives.
- James 4:8
- Jeremiah 29:12-14
- Hebrews 10:24-25
- In order to build a lifestyle in which we are consistently present for one another; We need to do 3 things.
 1. Notice who is already right in front of you.
 2. Put yourself out there – It is rare that someone will take the initiative in friendship, so quite waiting, you take the first step.
 - Prioritize deep connections- Connection takes stepping out and being intentional again and again.
 - Deut. 28:13 Lead by example= Show Christ

A few types of people to look for...

1. Sage –
 2. The encourager –
 3. The foxhole friend –
 4. The Challenger –
 5. The fun One –
 6. The Planner –
- No one can be everything, but everyone has something to say, something to teach you and something to bring to your life.
Look For It!!

3 Start great conversations

- To have deeper conversations, we have to learn the art of asking more intentional questions- How to ask good questions.

CREATE A GATHERING PLACE

HOW DO WE GET BACK TO LIVING IN AUTHENTIC, CONNECTED community the way generations of people have lived and the way Jesus calls us to live?

Researchers say that to grow an acquaintance to a good friend takes clocking two hundred hours together.⁶ So here's the first challenge of our big experiment to build meaningful community: **build an environment to have great conversations.**

During the COVID-19 quarantine of 2020, Zac and I often

took walks around the neighborhood, and one of my favorite sights was a front yard stuffed with six cheap, plastic, turquoise Adirondack chairs, all placed in a ring. On one of the chairs was always perched a bottle of mosquito spray, as if to say, "Pandemic, quarantine, not even stinkin' mosquitoes are gonna keep us from getting together!"

That's why I want you to start by getting a firepit. A basic one is not as expensive as you might think. If a fire is not possible where you live, then build your gathering spot, your place where people can congregate. Get a patio or picnic table or stick a couple of comfy outdoor chairs somewhere facing each other. However it works best for your particular home, create your gathering spot and stock it with whatever you need. We personally keep on hand dozens of supplies for s'mores at all times.

And then you invite. You spontaneously but also deliberately and regularly start inviting people in your everyday world. People will say no, and you keep inviting anyway.

And then you ask real questions, the kind that make everyone just uncomfortable enough that you might actually get to know them. You go first and volunteer your answers to get things rolling. Then all of you sit together and you laugh and you clock some of those two hundred hours you need to grow those relationships into what's considered real friends.

Remember, you aren't the only one craving community. Everyone is craving it. So be the one who makes it happen!

Ideas for Building Relationships with Proximity

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- Buy a firepit and invite over friends who live close to your house.
- Invite a friend to run errands with you.
- Invite someone at work to walk to the vending machine with you.
- Who do you see when you are walking your dog? Talk to them and walk together. Note their name (and their dog's name!) down in your phone so you don't forget it.
- Introduce yourself to strangers in the coffee shop.
- Go up to the people sitting by themselves at church and invite them to lunch.
- If you are new to a city, ask the person next to you at church something like, "Where is the best place to get Thai in Dallas?" And then invite them to join you there for a meal.
- Take the newest person in your office out to lunch.
- Ask another family to join yours for celebratory ice cream after your kid's sporting event.
- Frequent a restaurant and learn your waiter's name and ask how you can pray for him.

I HAVE A HARD TIME
TRUSTING. -PATTI

I'M AFRAID I MIGHT
NEED MORE THAN
I CAN GIVE. -KIM

I'M UNABLE TO LET GO
OF OLD FRIENDSHIPS
THAT HURT ME. -CHRISTY

I'VE BEEN REJECTED SO
MUCH IN THE PAST.

-BROOKE

I FEEL LIKE A BURDEN,
SO I JUST DON'T GO DEEP.

-MOLLY

I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO
PRETEND THAT I AM OKAY
OR BE JUDGED. -STEFANIE

Create A Gathering Place

- How do you keep in touch, maintain and grow long distance friendships?
- Remember to look for your people in unexpected places. Life stage does not matter, age doesn't matter. Find the people who are following after Jesus and then go with them.

Chapter 6 Safe

Open Doors: Goal: Transparency

Barrier: Pain/Shame

Scriptures:

- Vulnerability is the soil for intimacy
- It is easier to put up walls
- We hide because of pain
- We must risk pain to have deep connections in our lives
- We hide because of shame – the enemy loves for us to self-protect.

- To be fully loved requires being fully known – It is only when we let down our guards and allow ourselves to be known can we get over ourselves and get on with loving people.

How to make transparency a way of life

- Start with yourself- Question yourself
- Plan a get together
- Prepare your friend
- Lead the conversation
- Resist the temptation to solve.
- Affirm your friend
- Plan a follow-up gathering

YOUR TURN

PRACTICE TRANSPARENT CONVERSATION

GRAB THE HANDFUL OF PEOPLE YOU'VE IDENTIFIED AS your three to five closest friends—or acquaintances with the potential to become close friends. Invite them to dinner this week and practice the six steps of having a vulnerable conversation.

If you're like me, you may have a difficult time being aware of what exactly is even happening inside you.

Some people will run from any deep conversation because they don't want to go there or they don't know how to go there. We have to get good at drawing people out. Here is an inventory to help chase down and (lovingly) tackle that friend who is running away from her feelings. (Written by someone who is an expert at running away from my hard feelings.)

To take some of the pressure off, you and your handful of friends can fill this out ahead of time and take turns reading your answers aloud during your time together:

This week at work (or at home) I was busy with _____ and I felt _____.

I think I felt that way because _____.

I wish that _____ would happen.

Very few people know that _____ is happening in my _____.

I need _____, but I am afraid to ask for it.

I am hesitant to open up because _____.

The greatest way you could love me right now is to _____.

Ideas for Building Relationships with Transparency

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- Instead of ordering something on Amazon, try to borrow it from your neighbor instead.
- Move your firepit or picnic table into the front yard. Talk to people as they walk by and invite them to join you!
- Invite your neighbors to watch a movie on a projector in your front yard.
- Ask your safe people to meet up for coffee and prepare them that you want to go deeper.
- Answer honestly the next time someone asks, "How are you doing?"
- Call a friend instead of texting her. Even if it's not a serious call, it gets you talking a little bit more.
- Ask your friends about the highs and lows of their week.
- Tell someone you like her. Literally say, "I like spending time with you."
- Work without your headphones. Make yourself available.
- Leave your phone in the car when you meet up with a friend.
- Ask someone for her advice with something you're struggling with, even if it's small.

I WANT OTHERS TO NEED
ME, BUT I DON'T WANT TO
HAVE TO NEED OTHERS.

-MAE ELIZABETH

PEOPLE DON'T
UNDERSTAND ME.

-KATY

I JUST CAN'T
SEEM TO AGREE WITH
PEOPLE. -MORGAN

I'M AFRAID IF I AM
VULNERABLE, I MIGHT
BE REJECTED. -SUE

I'M TOO MUCH FOR HER. -DANA

I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO
JUDGE ME WHEN I LET MY
WALLS DOWN. -MEGAN

Chapter 7 Protected

Anvil: Goal: Accountability

Barrier: Pride

- Accountability calls us to who we were meant to be through truth mixed with grace.
- We need people who see us. Who call us up and out
- BUT.. we hate words like- Accountability, Submission or Correction.

The benefits of living accountable

- Makes us more effective
- Calls us to live better
- Challenges us to reach higher

The process of being sharpened

- Gives permission to this person or people to tell you the truth
- Asks them regularly: What area do you see in my life that I need to grow in? What practices do I need to embrace in order to grow and mature? Will you hold me accountable to this change?
- Plan a follow up meeting
- Ask your friend or friends if you can hold them accountable for anything.
- Don't settle for nice
- Don't surround yourself with mirrors.

The great cover up – Pride is our defense when we are accused.

- Determine if someone is a trustworthy voice in your life?

YOUR TURN

*PURSUE
ACCOUNTABILITY
TOGETHER*

BEFORE YOU MEET WITH YOUR FRIENDS THIS WEEK, SPEND some time reflecting on the following questions and writing your answers in your journal or making notes in your phone:

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Why am I worried?

What problems am I facing?

Where am I feeling insecure?

What sin am I fighting?

What am I learning?

What am I trying to control?

Then when you gather with your friends, discuss your answers to these questions. Share a problem you're facing and ask your group to speak into it or help solve it. Make a plan together and take time praying about what each of you shared.

**Ideas for Finding
Accountability**
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- Ask people for advice. This opens up room for them to speak candidly.
- Remember what your friend tells you. Put prompts on your calendar or in your phone to remind you to pray.
- Do an overnight retreat with five friends you are getting close with.
- Give a few trusted people permission to call you out.
- Get around older women and ask them to show you how to handle a situation.
- Look for someone approximately fifteen years older than you. Ask her, "What's one piece of advice you'd give yourself if you were in the same season I'm in?"

I'M TOO EXHAUSTED
FROM BEING A MOM, WIFE,
EMPLOYEE TO BE
A GOOD FRIEND. -KENNEDY

THE THING THAT STOPS ME
FROM FINDING AND KEEPING MY
PEOPLE IS THAT I WORRY THAT
THEY WILL TAKE ME AWAY FROM
MY FIRST PRIORITIES: MY FAMILY
AND MINISTRY. -STELA H.

NOBODY IS
AVAILABLE
WHEN I NEED
THEM. -TERI

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET
PAST THE GETTING-TO-
KNOW-YOU SMALL TALK.

-EMILY

TO BE HONEST, IT'S
EASIER TO DO LIFE BY
MYSELF. -ASHLEY

PEOPLE DON'T
HAVE TIME
FOR ME. -JOY

Chapter 8 Deep

Shovel: Goal: Shared Purpose

Barrier: Shallow/Small Talk

- What's keeping you busy these days?
 - What are you up to today?
 - What activities are you involved in?
- Why Our lives feel fractured and disconnected

Who could you pull into the missions you are already accomplishing?

Who could you join on their missions?

Who are you already on mission with that could become a deeper friend?

- Romans 12:4-8
- We mistakenly think friendship is about us
- Most satisfying and bonding types of relationships arise when friendship and community are centered on a bigger mission.
- Luke 10:1-24
- Anywhere can become a place to carry out your mission and become teammates
- We are gathered together to give love away.
- True discipleship isn't something you do once a week . It's what you do every day because that's when you get to know people.

- II Thess. 3:10-12
- Get busy
- Discipleship is inconvenient, uncomfortable, and very messy.

THE PATH TO CONNECTION

YOUR TURN

*FINDING A WAY
TO SERVE TOGETHER*

FIRST, A QUICK ASSESSMENT. THERE ARE 168 HOURS IN A week. Let's take inventory of how you are spending time.

ACTIVITY	TIME SPENT
_____	_____ hours
_____	_____ hours
_____	_____ hours
_____	_____ hours
_____	_____ hours
_____	_____ hours
_____	_____ hours

In view of your God-given purpose to love others into eternity, what does this list reveal about where you need to:

1. Add (Do you have a significant amount of margin?) _____
2. Subtract (Are you too busy for people?) _____
3. Invite + Include (How can you intentionally build your close friends and purposeful interactions into your week?)

Hopefully you're building traction with a few people you want to continue on with. Or maybe you still don't see a lot of potential. If so, you might invite new friends to join you in a specific activity. Either way, put yourself out there with a few people and trust the process.

Ideas for Pursuing a Mission Together

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- Join a club. Gardening, tennis, cards, running, biking, volunteering.
- Go play pickleball, tennis, spikeball. Invite the people on the court to join your game.
- Host a freezer meal night. Chop and prepare the food together and everyone takes home a few meals!
- As a small group, sign up for a semester of kids' ministry duty together, working in the nursery, teaching a class, mentoring teens.
- Go to fun workout classes. Struggle together, laugh, and get Sonic afterward!
- Plan a supper club with your neighbors. Cook through a cookbook together! Everyone prepares and brings one recipe.
- Paint someone's room, clean out a closet, or plant some flowers together.
- If you usually work at home by yourself, take your laptop to a coffee shop one morning and invite a friend to sit with you.

RIGHT WHEN I START TO GET
DEEP WITH SOMEONE, I PULL
BACK WHEN THERE'S A HINT
OF TENSION OR I THINK THEY
MIGHT BE UPSET WITH ME.

-BROOKE

I HAVE EXPECTATIONS
OF WHAT I THINK
"MY PEOPLE" SHOULD
BE, AND THEY DON'T
MEASURE UP. -SANDRA

TO BE HONEST, I'D RATHER JUST
MOVE ON AND FIND A NEW FRIEND
THAN STICK IT OUT. -CARRIE

I'M THE ONLY ONE
INVESTING IN THIS
FRIENDSHIP. -JENNIFER

FINDING AND KEEPING
AND GOING DEEP WITH
FRIENDS IS CHALLENGING
BECAUSE OF THE UNREALISTIC
EXPECTATIONS I HAVE OF
OTHERS. -GAYLA

STAYING FRIENDS AFTER
AN ARGUMENT IS JUST
TOO AWKWARD. I DON'T
KNOW HOW TO MOVE
PAST IT. -ELLA

Chapter 9 Committed

Goal: Consistency

Busyness: Conflict

- Conflict is a healthy part of relationships
- Conflict should make friendships, not break them
- Gal. 6:1-2
- I Thess. 4:18
- James 5:16
- Col. 3:13-14
- We must become people who come close, who engage and choose to stay.
- Conflict in the right context – Hurt is part of the health.
- Now, come to the table and let's have a full course meal
Lots of laughter, lots of time together, lots of people talking together, lots of love and lots of fighting.
- Conflict is safe when you know you won't quit each other.
- Conflict is a part of life and we have to figure out how to deal with it in a way that honors and glorifies God to the rest of the world.
How do we do this?
 1. Assume the best
 2. Keep short accounts
 3. Be quick to apologize
 4. Aim to be a peacemaker

A key reason for our loneliness is that we give up too easily.

YOUR TURN**LOGGING CONSISTENT
TIME TOGETHER**

COMMIT TO A DAY AND A TIME TO INVEST CONSISTENTLY with a small group of friends every week for the next six months. Here's how:

1. Pick your people. _____
2. Invite them to gather more regularly. _____
3. Pick your time and location and keep it consistent. _____
4. Decide how long you're going to commit to this. It's okay to set an end date. _____
5. Discuss together how you plan to handle conflict.

Ideas for Embracing the Inconvenience of Friendship

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- Who in your friend group needs to be supported? Organize a way for everyone to do something nice for that person.
- Reach out to a friend who is pulling away from you and/or God, someone who is isolating herself. Take over a meal and check on her.
- Ask your friend to pray together with you.
- Let go of minor offenses and truly move on.
- Don't gossip when you have been wronged.
- Pray about a hurt you experience before talking through it with your friend.
- Be the one who says, "I feel like things aren't right between us. Is there anything we should talk through?"
- After you have reconciled, or if you've chosen to simply let go of a hurt, treat your friend normally the next time you see her.
- Send a casual, lighthearted text about something you can do together.

Part 3 Fighting For Your Village

Chapter 10 Finding Your Family

- Family is God's very first, best place for us to learn to live in community.
- The original family plan- The first best community God created was family – Adam and Eve; In the image of God.
- To bless people through families then bless families throughout the world.
- But let's be real, family is hard.
- But the good news is that we can learn a better way to relate, and we absolutely can heal.
- We are to love in the manner in which we ourselves have been loved!!
- A family is waiting for you- God has built a beautiful family just for you to be a part of – His Own!!
- Ruth 1:16-17

Chapter 11 Holding On To Your People

- Eph. 6:12
- This is going to take work and it is worth fighting for.
- The enemy's tactics to divert God;s plan
 - The trap of Codependency
 - The trap of Independence
 - The trap of Busyness
 - The trap of Gossip

The trap of Comparison

The trap of Laziness

The trap of Fear

- Toxic relationships – Prov. 4:23
- The truth is always difficult, until it absolutely liberates your life.
- You may have Isolated yourself from the very thing God wants to use to help you grow.
- Isn't this worth fighting for?....

Chapter 12 Intimacy Of The Few

- We need people who are in it with us
- We only need a few
- We belong to each other
- We are never alone, We have Jesus
- Find your people and never let go.