**Finding Friends**

**Connection Connoisseur Episode 7**

Welcome to the Connection Connoisseur! My name is Brenda Ridgley and it is my mission to help women connect and build a handful of deep friendships. A Tribe that will love, nurture and support you and each other throughout the ups and downs of life.

Maybe you already have a few good friends or even a best friend. Maybe you have had good friends in the past but have lost touch over the years. Maybe you feel like you have never had a best friend. Whether you are starting from scratch or would like to add a gal or two to your support system, this episode is about finding friends. Today we will discuss how to find new friends and what to do when you meet someone you would like to get to know better.

Stay tuned, later in the episode I will share 9 specific ways to meet new friends. Please subscribe to this channel!

How do we make new friends since the origin and impact of social distancing?  It starts with *intention* and ends with *action*.  We must be intentional about connecting to others because it may not happen naturally.  So let's start from here as if we are inspired for the very first time to build our own Tribe.  Maybe you have a bunch of contacts on Facebook and haven’t really known what you were missing… until now.  Perhaps your life has been so full as a wife and mother you have made little time for anything else… until now.  Possibly your career has had you on the run from dawn until dusk for a decade, and you just hadn’t created the space for deep friendship… until now.  Maybe you feel like you have never connected deeply with a friendship but you long to be seen, heard, understood and want to belong. You can have it. As Napoleon Hill said best “Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve”. All it takes is a burning desire, a decision, a plan, and this will provide you with the belief to take action and make it happen.

What is it you desire? Is it someone to go out or hang out with on the weekends? Is it someone you can confide in about your work, family, or health problems? Is it having someone care about you that doesn’t “need” anything from you? A great exercise to establish what your desire is…is to journal, record or document in some way what this new person would be like and how they would impact your life in a positive way. This is a powerful law of attraction exercise that provides a detailed “ASK’ to your higher power. Once created, the universe will get to work on your behalf to make that connection happen for you.

Begin the process with a little brainstorming session.  Daydream for a few moments about what your life will look like once you have established and nurtured your new friend or Tribe.  How will it make you feel to have a steadfast cheering section who will encourage you and celebrate every little victory in your life?  You now have someone to turn to when you need honest advice.  You feel secure in that your secrets can be shared, yet you are confident that they are safe and in good hands.  You share meaningful bonding experiences filled with fun and adventure.  You connect regularly and you leave each encounter filled to the brim with love, acceptance and validation.  You feel unstoppable because with your Tribes support, you can overcome any obstacle and reach every goal.  You have a pack to run with through life.  That is the power of your future Tribe.

Close your eyes and picture in your mind these foundational friendships in action.  See their smiling faces beam when you walk in the door.  Feel the joy you receive with their loving hugs and squeezes.  See it so clearly that you feel as if you are there right now.   This exercise is quite motivating and allows you to feel a sense of the benefits you will receive before the goal is accomplished.   Visualization is a powerful tool that accelerates the universe’s energies toward actualizing your intention.

Now put it on paper.  Journal your future life story.  Write about your new friend or Tribe and how it has impacted your life and write as if it has already happened.  How many members are in your Tribe?  Write about each kind of friendship you are seeking and how each individual adds value to your Tribe.  How do you support each other?  What kinds of activities do you enjoy doing together?  How do you connect on a regular basis?  How do you feel now that you have this group of women who always have your back?  Write down your gratitude for having such a perfectly imperfect Tribe.  As you write each sentence, go to that feeling place, activate the joy, gratitude and peace that are sure to come with this new powerful part of your life.

There is magic in writing down your vision.   Putting your desires, hopes and dreams down on paper as if they have become your reality helps them become real.  This method and action of writing down your goal brings clarity and focus to what you really want.  It cements our ideas and takes those floating dreams from our head and heart and brings them into the present here and now.  Seeing it in writing makes it suddenly feel real and gives us that sense of possibility.  Close your eyes and imagine your declared dream and feel the emotions as if you have achieved the moment.  This exercise is a powerful step in the creation process.  You now know what you want your Tribe to be and can see it clearly.  The feeling you practiced generates a universal path that leads you to your dream actualized.  You have activated your burning desire.  Now go after it.

Now that you have identified what you want, and fueled that desire with the excitement of what this new friend will do for you it is now decision day.

First let make it very clear that not making a decision… is a decision.  Every day we make decisions moment by moment on things ranging from the inconsequential to life-altering.  The fact is that your day, year and entire life are defined by the sum of the decisions you make and the actions you take along the way.  Everything you have experienced, both the good and the bad, started with a decision and has shaped your life. Indecision is a decision by default.

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

~Lau Tzu

 Although literally true, I don’t believe Lau Tzu was referring to a physical journey but rather a decision.  The first step is never physical.  It is entirely mental.  The first step is a decision.  A decision to commit.  A decision to act.  Interestingly, the definition of the word decision is “cutting off; division; detachment of a part”.  It’s as if by making a decision we are eliminating all other options.  Decisiveness builds character and purpose and attributes that we can aspire to and accomplish by making a decision to act.

 The minute you make a decision you have set your life in a new direction.  It is exciting to think that you have the power to change your trajectory on anything in an instant.  If your relationships aren’t where you want them to be, you don’t need to continue telling that story.  Having made the decision to build your Tribe, and vowing to accept no other outcome, you now have a new story.  It is time to put your decision to work.

Today is the Day. Do you want to feel whole with a full life beyond work, social media and family obligations? How do you want your Tribe and friendships to look 90 days from today?  How about six months, one year and five years from now?  The small adjustments and friendship habits you decide on today, and implement, will determine the future of your friendships and Tribe.  Decide on a new friendship goal.  When you identify the desired outcome, it sets universal forces in motion.  The universe has your back and will begin to line up the path and assist you in reaching your goal.

“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

former first lady of the United States

How will you connect with new women who could become future Tribe members?  As promised, here are nine examples of friendship habits you may try to start finding new friends.

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1. Get out of the house!  You aren’t going to meet anyone binge watching Netflix!
2. Challenge yourself to put your phone away when you are out in public.  Instead find opportunities to make conversation.  When you are on-the-go focused on your phone as you wait in lines, and even walking, you miss a lot of connection possibilities.  Your routine likely passes some of the same people every day.  If you say hello or chat for a few minutes, that is a breeding ground for friendship.  You miss these opportunities with your nose buried in the phone.
3. Sign up for a class: Spanish, zumba, art, cooking, baking, bird watching, wine tasting.  What are you interested in?  Here you will meet others who have the same interests.  Give it a chance, commit to attending a minimum of three classes.  Once you have made a few contacts, just keep showing up!
4. Open up a conversation with a stranger.  Use the *insight and question method*.  This conversion starter involves commenting on current events and then asking a question about their opinion of it.  Research has shown that expressing our opinions activates brain regions that are associated with pleasure and reward.  Your question will likely be received with gratitude for the opportunity to share.  Steer clear of hot divisive topics.  You are inviting conversation, not debate.
5. Volunteer for a good cause and connection.  Build a house for the homeless, serve a meal to the hungry, clean up a park to beautify the neighborhood.  You will meet some great people who also care about the community.  Strike up a conversation with someone and reconnect each time you volunteer together.
6. Join a club.  There are all kinds of clubs out there.  Seek one that interests you!  Running, walking, hiking, beer/wine enthusiasts, travel, dining, paddleboarding, sailing, golf, and community service just to name a few!  You already have something in common to talk about with these folks so making new friends will be easy!  Let friendship be a result of doing something you enjoy.
7. Be a good listener.  You have one mouth and two ears.  Practice using them accordingly.  Don’t dominate the conversation. Ask people about themselves and listen sincerely when they answer. Listen not to respond but to understand. A good listener is rare these days. It is the best direct route ticket you could possibly have to form a friendship.
8. Find a local online group that discusses topics of interest to you.  Actively participate in the discussions and meet up with them when they have an activity.  If they don’t ever get together make a suggestion that they do so!
9. Tap into your friends of friends network.  Take an inventory of who you know and who *they* know.  This may be someone you have seen around but had yet to be introduced.  Exploring adjacent friends gives you a head-start in the connection process because you already have a friend in common.

*For new weekly ideas on ways to connect and build aTribe, sign up for my weekly newsletter* [*LadyandtheTribe.com*](http://www.ladyandthetribe.com)*.*

 The sky's the limit here, get creative!  In your journal, create a plan that supports the decision you made to build your Tribe.  Pick out three to five actions from the lists above, or ones that you come up with on your own.  Make a commitment to yourself to put your plan into action by writing it down.

Stating the goal or the decision is not enough.  Does this goal scare you a little?  Yes?  Good!  You are leaving the comfort zone and about to create some new habits that will serve you.  This may be a bit scary but also exciting!  You may not know each step you will take, and that may cause some anxiety.  Fear prevents many people from taking action.  I am here to tell you that you don’t need to plan out every possible detail to build your Tribe.  You will find your way, one step at a time.

Your journey begins with a single step toward your goal as outlined today. Identify your burning desire and set your friendship goals. Next week we will talk more in depth about your plan. I will share a strategy that will help you go after your future friendships in an organized way that sets intentions and adds consistency. This plan will ease your anxiety because you will know just what to do and what to expect. Don’t miss it! Have you subscribed yet? See you next time!

When Three or more gather, we are Tribe.

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