

I don't trust her with my secrets

Connection Connoisseur Episode 9

Welcome friends! I am so glad you are here today. My name is Brenda Ridgley and I am the connection connoisseur! I'm a girlfriend guru of sorts and it is my mission to help women connect in a deeper more meaningful way. I believe that we need a support system, a Tribe to lift us up, keep us grounded and provide a place where we belong.

Today we are going to have a conversation about one of the biggest reasons women don't connect. Near the end of this chat I have a secret to share with you! Please subscribe today and share your thoughts on the topic in the comment section at the conclusion of this episode.

I believe in my heart that my girlfriend Tribe guided me to my purpose and saved me from my mid-life "what's it all about" funk. This life experience inspired me to do the research to discover how close, deep, personal friendships can enhance our mental as well as physical lives. It also lead me to learn about why many women are reluctant to go beyond superficial relationships, drift apart from friendship or don't just connect at all..... and how not having close friendships hurt us and can even make us sick.

I recently wrote a book based on my journey to find wholeness through friendship called Lady and the Tribe. I am super excited about it and I can hardly believe the rate at which I was able to share on the topic of women's friendships. It's as if I was channeling every word, simply writing it down as it was offered to me.

So what do you think are the top reason's that women experience a "failure to launch" of sorts when it comes to creating deep meaningful

relationships with other women? A big one is TRUST. There are many aspects that are held within the trust factor but today we are going to talk about Secrets. Many women feel they can't trust other women with their secrets.

It is true, as a gender we have a tendency to over-share when we connect to facilitate stimulating conversation. Our intention is usually not to hurt anyone, but rather to appear "in the know" and BE interesting. As entertaining as it can be to "share" a secret, the price is possibly losing what could be a true deep friendship. If you desire more meaningful friendships you need to know that telling secrets can be a deal breaker. In a moment I am going to share with you five strategies to be a better secret-keeper.

Secrets. Aren't they a double-edged sword? On one hand you are delighted and honored that someone trusts you enough to confide in you. On the other hand this responsibility is quite a burden! It makes no difference if the information is exciting, shocking, personal, big or small, you are now under obligation to keep your lips sealed. If you betray that trust, at a minimum it could be destructive to your friendship and prevent it from growing deeper. It is possible you could damage the relationship beyond repair, effectively ending the friendship. Your own reputation could take a hit, now you are someone not to be trusted and the word gets out.

Rather than immediately leaning in with an interested *do tell* when you hear "I have a secret", you may want to take a step back. Accepting the responsibility of a secret can be a life changing decision. When it comes to your Tribe, you are building life-long friendships with these ladies. You don't want to jeopardize this relationship if you are a bad secret keeper. You know who you are! You may want to consider asking a few follow-up questions prior to consenting to hear a secret. For example, when someone says they have a secret to share you may want to ask:

1. Is it a big secret or a little secret?
2. How long must I keep this secret?
3. Is there anyone else who knows or anyone you are allowed to tell?

Knowing the answers to these questions will help you decide if you can handle, or even want the responsibility. If you only have to keep the secret a certain amount of time instead of *forever*, that is good to know upfront. If you know you will tell someone, like your spouse, be upfront with that disclosure as well. If you don't think you can handle the pressure of a secret, stop them before they tell you. As exciting as having a secret is, keeping a secret can be stressful. As a general rule, if you like to avoid stress, just say no to secrets.

On the other hand, what are best friends for if you can't share a secret? As we grow in vulnerability and depth with our Tribe, there are bound to be conversations that include sensitive topics and require confidentiality. The secret keeping skill is a must have for Tribe so if you have trouble in this area, it is a skill you should develop. Here is the information I held secret from early in the episode. If you have a secret to keep, here are my 5 suggestions that may help you be a better secret keeper:

1. Avoid the topic. Even related topics should be evaded as they are the *gateway drug* to consciously or unconsciously oversharing and accidentally spilling the beans.
2. Change the topic. Is the discussion getting too close for comfort to the secret? Casually steer the conversation in a different direction entirely.
3. Remove yourself from the conversation. Sometimes this is your only escape. Find an excuse to leave.

4. Become a deer in headlights. If someone asks you a direct question about the secret, pretend you don't know anything about it. One could say that this is borderline *lying* so it should only be done as a last resort.
5. Honest avoidance. If you are pressed for information, tell them that it isn't something you can talk about at this time. Ask them not to question you about it anymore.

When is it necessary to tell a secret? Well, does the secret endanger someone? Does it involve them harming themselves or someone else? Is it criminal? These are all things to consider when determining if the secret is too important to keep. There is a point when NOT keeping their secret is to their ultimate benefit. It's a tough spot to be in and the decision may be hard but it is a small price to pay to be a good friend.

Ladies, lets be better secret keepers and in effect, better friends. To attract great friendship and build a Tribe of these women, the solution is as simple as following the golden rule, "Treat others as you would like to be treated".

Until next time!

When Three or more gather, we are Tribe.

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