

FRIENTIMACY BY SHASTA NELSON

SUMMARY

Frientimacy is the state of being in a friendship that is satisfying, safe, and where both people feel seen.

FOR A RELATIONSHIP TO BE SATISFYING IT MUST HAVE A FOUNDATION OF POSITIVITY.

While positive feelings are necessary in all healthy relationships, they are paramount to our friendships because these are the relationships we are entering by choice. We all want friendships to add more joy, peace, and support to our lives.

FOR A RELATIONSHIP TO BE SAFE, IT MUST HAVE CONSISTENCY.

Consistency is the action of repeating our time together, which in turn develops our trust as we begin to create and modify expectations of one another. The more consistency we have, the more we can anticipate how a person will behave in different situations. Consistency gives our new friendships momentum in getting to know one another and, over time, builds a shared history and increases our commitment to and support of one another.

FOR A RELATIONSHIP TO ALLOW BOTH PEOPLE TO FEEL SEEN, THERE MUST BE VULNERABILITY.

As we spend time together more consistently, we are also incrementally revealing and sharing more of who we are. The more we let someone see us (always increasing our positivity with responses such as affirmation, acceptance, and empathy), then the more loved we'll feel for who we are.

DISCUSS

1. How resistant do you feel to the idea of being lonely? Do you admit it with ease or deny it, even if it's sometimes true? Why is that?
2. Shasta defines loneliness as our body's way of telling us that we have more capacity to give and receive love and that much like hunger or thirst, we need to respond to that information for the health of our bodies. How might that change your response when you feel lonely?
3. Of the three requirements for healthy friendships (positivity, consistency, and vulnerability), which one would make the biggest difference in your relationships if it increased? What might that look like?

4. Of the three requirements for healthy friendships (positivity, consistency, and vulnerability), which one is the scariest or most challenging for you to develop? Why? What is your underlying fear, cost, or concern?
5. Our small groups strive for consistency, positivity, and vulnerability. Do you think any of the components might develop faster or slower than the others? What might help a small group bond in the most gradual and healthy way possible?
6. In what ways might the Frientimacy Triangle change someone's expectations about what to expect from a small group?
7. Shasta's favorite exercise for practicing vulnerability is to go around the circle and have each person share one highlight and one lowlight from the last week (allowing about 1–2 minutes per person). Let's share something we're celebrating, proud of, or that we really enjoyed and one thing that is causing stress, that was hard, or that has been disappointing.

