

How To Love Yourself No Matter What

Episode 303

The Real Reason Adult Friendships Feel So Hard

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I hear women say all the time that they want more friends. I hear them say that they want deeper friendships, that they want their people, they want a group of women they can laugh with and text and go for coffee with. But when we start talking about how they approach friendships, something really interesting shows up.

The mindset that I see most often is women walking into rooms thinking that nobody likes them. Women constantly scanning for rejection, both in person and when they're at home online. Women thinking about how they're being perceived. Women believing that the way that they are seen as human beings is less than.

I see women worrying. If they're being awkward or if they're being annoying. And then on the other side of it, what I also see is women being resentful of other women because they're not being included in friendship circles. And this is something that I coach on a lot. So if you were walking around thinking about yourself that much, what you need to know is that you can actually never be present enough to build a friendship.

When all of the thoughts that you have about friendship are about you, you are just not going to be present enough to build a friendship. When somebody believes, as a woman, when you believe that people don't like you or that you don't measure up, or that they don't see you like an equal. When someone believes that they're going to become hyper self-focused, they're going to become guarded.

They're going to become approval seeking, they're going to become emotionally preoccupied. And what that really means is that they're not actually showing up as a friend. They're actually showing up as somebody who's silently asking, do you like me? Am I doing this right? Did I say something weird? Are you judging me?

And that energy just doesn't build connection when we are walking around in the world, assuming what people are thinking when we are walking around in the world, feeling frustrated and resentful about other women and making assumptions about whether or not they want to spend time with us and what we're making it mean about whether or not they're available.

When we do that, we block, we block friendship, and we block connection without meaning to sometimes. I really see that the way that women talk about friendship is kind of like collecting dolls. They'll say things like, I want a group of friends, or I want my people, or I want a friend to go for brunch with or a friend to go for a walk with.

I want friends. But friendships aren't objects you collect, friendships are relationships you build, and that means that inside of these relationships, we need to be listening. We need to be remembering things about someone. We need to be showing up. We need to be caring about their life. We need to be asking questions.

We need to be being generous with our attention. We need to be there and show that person that we're genuinely interested in them instead of pulling them in as one of our doll collections that we can have. Because having friends isn't performative. That is not what we're doing. The thing that you might not be thinking about when you're struggling with friendship and when you're looking out at a sea of people and wondering how to connect and how to fit in and how to get friends, and I put that in air quotes, okay?

Is that nobody wants a friend who is only thinking about herself the whole time. If someone sits with you and the whole time they're internally thinking, am I interesting? Am I being judged? Do they like me? What do they think of me? They're not actually engaged with you. And people feel that. They feel it.

It doesn't matter the words you say. It doesn't matter the actions you take. What matters is what's under it, because you wear that like perfume. People feel it, and that is always true. The truth is, is that actual friendship is not. Do they like me? Instead, it's asking, what does this person like? What matters to this person?

What are they excited about lately? What are they struggling with? What makes them laugh? You become curious. You become attentive. You become someone who notices people, and that is what good friends do. The truth is that you will create more amazing friendships if this is how you show up to friendship.

But too often what I see is women really struggling with their self-worth, really struggling with their self-esteem and walking into spaces where there's other women and honestly wanting to manipulate the other side. And I don't mean that in a mean way, I also do this. We all do it. I wanna humanize this for you, but the real truth about adult friendship is.

That we want to stop obsessing about ourselves. If you want more friends, the key is to heal the relationship that you have with yourself. I've been having a number of relationships with clients this week, and I have coached a lot on this. I did six coaching calls on Tuesday and. This is a theme that shows up for a lot of women, especially as we get older.

So when we look at friendship when we're younger, friendship is easier because of our proximity to other people. So we have a lot in common with other people when we're younger. Right when we're a kid, I remember Jerry Seinfeld did this skit about how it was so easy as a kid to make friends. Like you would ride your bicycle and you'd see another kid with a bicycle and you'd be like, hi.

And they'd be like, hi. And it's like, you have a bike. I have a bike, let's be friends. And it would be like, okay, we're friends. And then you would just ride off into the friendship sunset. Right? But truthfully, you are just around a lot of other people that have a lot of things in common with you when you are a kid.

Then when you get older and you move into university and college, you meet people there. When you get married, you have your work friends. Then if you have children, you have your kid friends, you have your friends that you have that have babies at the same time as you, as you age out of that, you move into your kids' activities and your kids' sports, and there's always a friendship group and a generation of friends that you end up being with.

But there comes a point when we realize when we get older that these sources for friendship, these commonalities no longer are as easy to find. We don't find common ground as easily.

There aren't places and spaces just given to us where we're around people who share a common interest. And so as we get older and as we move into friendship as an older adult, it can be very.

Very, um, what was, what is the word? It can very be very easy to slide in to a belief that nobody wants to be your friend. That people don't like you. And the way that I like to teach it is I, I teach it with respect to being three buckets and in bucket number one. Is all of the people that you're getting to know, people that you're meeting, people that you didn't know before, people that are interested in the same things as you.

All of this is going into bucket number one, and then bucket number one flows into number bucket number two. And bucket number two is people that you now know that your nurturing into friendship. You're inviting them to do things. You're participating in clubs, you're going to events where they will be.

You are out in the world. Existing with these people and you're known. And then bucket number three is when we invite them to become a friend, when we start inviting them one-on-one, when we start actually asking them to do things with us. And where I find people get stuck as we get older in particular, is that we stop looking at bucket number one, and we put a lot of attention on bucket number two and three, right?

So. On bucket number two, we don't have a lot of people coming into that nurturing bucket. So there's not a lot of people that we can transition into friendship because there's not a po a lot of people in that bucket. So we're putting a lot of pressure on those people to become friends. And then the people in number three are also phasing out because the things that are in common, the commonality that we have between us no longer possibly exists.

Maybe our thoughts and our beliefs and our values are not the same. And so those people. Are coming out and we start to feel panic because we don't have any friends, and I'm putting that in air quotes. And so what happens is we start to feel lonely and we start to feel disconnected. And then before you know it, we're looking at our friendships, groups thinking I need more friends.

But the way we're thinking about it is very broken. And so what we actually need to do is we actually need to go out there and we need to be meeting more people, and we need to be doing

things with people so that we can start understanding which are the right people, which are the people that we enjoy, which are the people that enjoy us, where are our connection points?

But if we don't have enough volume, we can't do that. And so what. I see is we put all this pressure on these people that are in bucket number two, trying to move them into bucket number three. And we are resentful, we are angry. We believe that people suck, that nobody wants to do anything, that the world is terrible.

And then we look at the friends in bucket number three, and we're really upset with them because they don't wanna be our friend anymore. And so every time we try to invite them to do something, they pa they, they opt out, they don't wanna do it, and we get very focused on this. And this is when it becomes very performative and it's a protection mechanism.

We become performative because we need to belong, to be able to belong to ourselves. That is the belief, but actually it's the opposite. We need to decide that we belong so we can go out in the world and meet more people and connect with them really and truly to be able to put them into bucket number two and bucket number three.

And if we don't do that, what we end up was with the scenario that I talked about before where there's a lot of resentment, there's a lot of pressure, there is a lot of loneliness, and there's a lot of performance, and there's a lot of you looking at friends like collectors items and not looking at friends, like actual individual human beings that you are developing connection with because you are making all of this mean that you are deficient.

So how do we fix it? Well, thing number one is we build and grow your self-love and self-esteem, and I have over 300 episodes about that on this podcast. So what I'll say to you right now is. You've got to make it your job to grow your lovability with yourself, and that is a mindset issue. That is a nervous system issue, that is an emotional issue that needs to be addressed.

If you're ready to move forward and get through that, let's get on a call. Let's do a discovery call. Just go to amanda.hess.ca, forward slash book a call. We can talk about it, but prior to that or after that, or in conjunction with that, I guess is what I should say. What we wanna also be doing is we want to be connecting.

Now, how do we connect? We cannot connect if we are guarded and protected and walking through the world believing that nobody likes us. So we're gonna have to be more vulnerable. And what do I mean by that? When I say you wanna be more vulnerable, you're going to have to put yourself in positions where you might not know anybody.

You are gonna have to put yourself in positions where you're unsure. Where you don't know how it's gonna turn out, you don't know how it's gonna feel. You don't know what it's gonna look like. We have to do this more. So we're gonna have to be able to feel emotions like embarrassment, shame. We're gonna have to feel those emotions.

They're gonna come up now. Are they the truth about us? No. But they are nonetheless feelings that we are going to feel in those environments. When we hear no, when we feel like this isn't the right room for me. When we do or say something that appears to be stupid, this is gonna happen. So we need to grow our capacity for those emotions.

Not shrink down, not shove them down, not make our life smaller. In fact, make our life bigger. Because if we make our life bigger and we have more capacity for shame and embarrassment is gonna show up, and I know this is the path forward, we'll do more of it and we'll have more people coming into bucket number one, because we will be meeting more people with similar interests to us, then we can start moving them into bucket number two in order to move them into bucket number two.

We need to start inviting them. Yes, sometimes you will be invited, but waiting for an invitation is not going to create more friends. Okay. And the reality is we live in an age where people are closed off because they also don't know how to do it. We went through COVID and I think in many ways there have been fallouts that we haven't even begun to see the repercussions of.

Does that mean that you can't have friends? No, but it does mean that you need to think about making friends differently. So because people are on, on their phones, in their homes, not participating outside, yes, you are gonna have to invite, and I truly believe that that's not a problem. You can experience the emotions that come with invitations and hearing the word no.

What are you gonna feel? Embarrassed. Ashamed. Okay. Well, if that's all there is, can you keep going? Because the truth is all those thoughts that create that aren't true anyways. None of them are true. They're all just made up thoughts anyways. So can I go out in the world and start asking people, Hey, you like coffee?

I like coffee. We both go to spin class. Let's go for coffee. Are you gonna be nervous? Yes. Doesn't mean that anything's gone wrong. No, but this is the way you have to do it. If you wanna have friends that are not just performance pieces, right, that aren't just a doll collection, that are actual real, genuine, incredible human beings that you get to have conversations with and go for brunch with and spend time with.

Now, I do wanna add the caveat here, or the caveat, I guess as you're supposed to say it, that yes, you are going to be. Probably putting yourself out there more than other people. Who cares? When people say to me, it's a lot of work, I'm like, it's a lot of work. Beating the shit outta yourself and feeling terrible about having no friends and nobody liking you, that's also a lot of work makes you feel like ass.

So let's put our brain to work doing a task that actually creates more of what you want. And so this is how we do it. And I say this with deep love because I also have to hear this because the world is set up in a way that we are going to have to do things differently if we want a different result.

Yes. So if we start inviting people to do things with us and we get better at feeling the emotions that come with rejection, we can do more of it. And when we make more invitations, we will move more people into bucket number three, which is our friendship bucket, where we get to have those people be a part of our life.

Now, here is the point that we really need to talk about In order to connect. You have to connect. You've gotta coach yourself into not being the person that is thinking about yourself when you're with somebody else. There can be no version of that. Instead, we learn the skill of thinking about other people and not just because it's a good thing to do, but because we're genuinely interested in them.

Think about people that you like being friends with. How are they with you? They're like, oh my God. Hi. It's so good to see you. Oh my gosh, I love you so much. I'm so glad we get to spend time together. That's the person that we wanna be friends with. Now, I'm not saying that you have to make yourself into a completely different person, but what I am saying is we need to change how you think about it, because your interest, no matter how you apply, it needs to be sincere.

I am getting to know you and I'm not expecting anything back from you. Needs to be the mission. And too often what I'm seeing is it's the opposite that we're doing. I am gonna put this energy into you and you better pay out like you're a vending machine. Can't do that. It won't work. It's not authentic, it's not genuine.

It doesn't create real connection. Real connection is I open the door to you and we are together and I am so genuinely excited to get to know you and I don't expect anything back from you. And when you do this, you are able to grow real connection. Now everybody isn't gonna be the right fit, so you're gonna do this with some people and you're gonna realize, this person isn't the person that I wanna connect with.

And that's okay. That's why we still have our number one bucket where people are coming in. As long as we keep all of these buckets flowing, we will end up with the end result of having a lot of really valuable, amazing friendships. But if we look at it from the standpoint of, I need this to believe that I'm good enough, that's when it breaks.

So. This is what I've got for you today. Building friendship is all about one person at a time, one relationship at a time, one conversation at a time, with not any expectation of getting anything back. Now, you might say to me, I do that already, Amanda and I get nothing back. And that tells me that you don't do it expecting nothing back.

You don't do it expecting nothing back because if you did, if you believe that giving gave the same connection. And the same value as receiving. You would be happy to give. But what it tells me when we don't want that, when we want something else is that I'm not doing the job of filling myself up here, of liking myself, of believing in myself, and so I need to focus there.

I need to build up myself. I need to validate myself. I need to be with myself. And then also at the same time, in conjunction I'm out really genuinely connecting with other people and reminding myself that I don't need to expect anything back. It doesn't have to be tit for tat that if I apply this concept and do this in this clean way, it will come back to me no matter what.

So my friends. I know this is a tougher episode, but I really wanted to record it because listen, I needed to hear it. You need to hear it. Go out in the world and connect. Get to know people, and don't expect anything back, and your life will change in the most incredible ways. Bye for now.

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