

# BookCircles Guide

## Frientimacy



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# Welcome

Dearest GirlFriend,

I may not yet have met you but the fact that you're thinking of leading a group of women in talking about deeper friendships makes me love you already! May your tribe increase! Our world needs way more women who are willing to not only intentionally nourish our own friendships but also inspire those around us. That's what you'll do as a Frientimacy BookCircle Facilitator!

The primary purpose of this packet is to provide you suggested discussion questions for any group who gathers to talk about *Frientimacy: How to Deepen Friendships for Lifelong Health and Happiness*. And my hope in writing the outline isn't just that the group discusses the book, but more importantly, that they develop bonds within the groups and leave with greater self-awareness!

There are two options for facilitating a BookCircle:

**1. Discuss Friendships! 1x**

Fun option for an existing book club or current group of friends to get together for one evening of book discussion and friendship celebration. Open the wine for a fun weekday evening, pour some tea for a weekend afternoon, or meet for mimosas and brunch one Sunday!

**2. Develop Friendships! 4x**

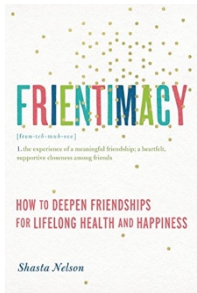
Ideal option to use the book as a way to develop more meaningful friendships by meeting weekly for a month! The goal is to get to know each other better-- whether it's all new acquaintances, friends from work or other setting, or even a group of already close women—4 weeks together will build a special bond. Each week will cover a couple of chapters, and provide fun activities and sharing questions that accelerate friendships. Open your living room (or pick a café!), invite women to dedicate a month to friendship building, and enjoy going deeper each week as you get to know each other in more meaningful ways. Members should be willing to commit to try to be present for 3 of the 4 weeks.

So pick the one that best fits your needs and I can't wait to hear how it goes! Post photos (and tag me!) and I'll comment on them and feel free to email me with stories and questions along the way! (Contact Info on Who Is Shasta Page!)

With so much love and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Shasta" with a small heart symbol to the left of the first letter.

## About the Book



With the constant connectivity of today's world, it's never been easier to meet people and make new friends—but it's never been harder to form meaningful friendships.

In *Frientimacy*, award-winning speaker Shasta Nelson shows how anyone can form stronger, more meaningful friendships, marked by a level of trust she calls "frientimacy."

Shasta's first book *Friendships Don't Just Happen: The Guide to Creating a Meaningful Circle of Girlfriends* is the bestselling book on how to make new friends—where she teaches her popular 5 Circles of Friends and walks the reader through the stages of developing friendships (there's also a book guide for that one!) But in *Frientimacy* she goes the next step and teaches us how to deepen those friendships and to practice the behaviors and actions that create the intimacy and closeness that we crave.

While most of us know more people than ever; we are also reporting greater dissatisfaction in the depth of our friendships.

Shasta teaches the Frientimacy Triangle which showcases the three requirements of friendship and explains how they work together so that anyone can start, build, repair, enhance, or even end any friendship. If two people aren't practicing all three requirements: then it's not a healthy friendship.

The book is outlined in this way:

- In Part 1: The Intimacy Gap, we'll discuss what it means to acknowledge and own our intimacy gaps.
- In Part 2: The Frientimacy Triangle, we'll discuss the tri-fold approach to embracing and deepening frientimacy: by enhancing the positivity, consistency, and vulnerability in all our friendships.
- In Part 3: Obstacles to Intimacy, we'll discuss the various stumbling blocks that can trip up our path to frientimacy.
- Then, in the conclusion, we'll cover how we can measure how far we've come by tracking relationship growth, courage growth, and love growth.

*Frientimacy* is more than just a call for deeper connection between friends; it's a blueprint for turning simple friendships into true bonds—and for the meaningful and satisfying relationships that come with them. The book is available at all major booksellers:







## About the Author

Shasta Nelson is a female friendship expert who not only powerfully reminds women to listen to their desire for more meaningful connection in their lives, but also gives the nuts-and-bolts of friendship, breaking it down in pieces and stages to help us develop the community in our lives that matters.

She is the founder and C.E.O. of GirlFriendCircles.com—a female friendship matching site in over 60 cities across the U.S. and Canada where women of all ages can sign-up to make new local friends. She is the author of two books: *Friendships Don't Just Happen! The Guide to Creating a Meaningful Circle of Girlfriends* and *Frientimacy: How to Deepen Friendships for Lifelong Health and Happiness*.

Her friendship advice and wisdom has been featured in such places as *The Today Show*, *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and in an interview with Katie Couric. Her spirited and soulful voice can also be found at ShastasFriendshipBlog.com and in her Huffington Post column where she regularly contributes on relationship health. She also teaches, keynotes, and hosts Friendship Accelerator, retreats, and Speed-Friending events throughout the U.S.

Her training includes a master's degree in spiritual growth and a bachelor's degree in communication—both of which she uses as she helps coach people into their healthiest relationships where she believes we do our greatest personal growth.

But while her work is incredibly meaningful and important to her, it is her relationships that mean the most. She's married to her best friend, Greg Nelson, is honored to be a stepmom to his three amazing kids, and is encircled by girlfriends, family members, and a community that enrich her life. They not only are the gym where she practices growing into a more compassionate, brave, and loving person—they are the people whose laughter and deep conversations fill her life and her soul.

**social media:** Want to engage on social media?

- <https://twitter.com/ShastaMNelson>
- [www.facebook.com/GirlFriendCircles](http://www.facebook.com/GirlFriendCircles)
- [www.pinterest.com/GFCircles/](http://www.pinterest.com/GFCircles/)
- [www.youtube.com/user/ShasGFC](http://www.youtube.com/user/ShasGFC)

**questions or comments:** Want to invite Shasta to speak, have a question for her, or want to tell her what you thought of this book? Visit [www.shastanelson.com](http://www.shastanelson.com).

## Getting Ready for The Book Circles

1. **A location:** Pick a location that is conducive to discussion: living rooms, hidden coffee shops, low-key wine bars, private dining rooms at restaurants. Note: If you're meeting for the 4x option, it's usually best to meet at the same location all four times.
2. **Attendees:** Invite women you know (or invite 2 women you know and ask them to each invite 2-3 more!) and get RSVP's. Aim for a group of 5-10 women who are willing to commit to try to be present for 3 out of the 4 gatherings. More ideas on the next page!
3. **Co-Host?** Consider co-hosting with someone so that you have more networks to invite from and someone else willing to help facilitate and/or manage logistics. Or if you decide to host alone, you can always ask different girls to volunteer to facilitate different weeks by giving them the notes for that particular week.
4. **Dates:** Schedule the first date where your attendees will have time to read the first 2 chapters. Then try to schedule the remaining three with as much consistency as possible (i.e. every Tues night).
5. **Food:** Ask everyone to help bring food and drink as that not only makes your time together more delicious and comfortable but it's always better to involve other people so they have a role and feel more compelled to show up.
6. **Reminder:** Always send out a reminder with all the event details to your attendees the week before and tell them you're looking forward to seeing them.

# Who to Invite to your Book Circle

The ideal size for group interaction is somewhere between 5-9 women. They don't need to all know each other—see it as a fun and easy way to give women one more meaningful way to meet other potential friends. Pick any number of these ideas to start pulling a group together:

- 1. Invite the women you want to know better.** Just make a list of women you've met from various places and shoot them an email invitation: "I'm inviting a handful of women I admire and inviting them all over for a book circle about female friendship. Hope you can come!"
- 2. GirlFriendCircles.com.** Post it on the GirlFriendCircles.com calendar. All posted events are sent to all local members every Wednesday. And be sure to send personal invitations to other members you've met or want to meet.
- 3. The Contagious Invitation.** Invite 2-3 women you know and invite them to each invite 2-3 more women they know so you're all meeting new friends!
- 4. Recruit at work.** If appropriate, share the invitation at work: "Research shows that having friends at work does more for our happiness than getting a financial raise! Let's get to know each other better!"
- 5. Consider existing groups.** What organizations are you already involved in that you can host this as a way to deepen connections? Church. School. Mothers Group. Club. Gym.
- 6. Use Social Media.** Make an event on Facebook and invite everyone nearby. Post a shout-out on Twitter and use the hashtag #Friendimacy to see if anyone else is looking. Reach out to contacts on LinkedIn!
- 7. Tell the Men.** Don't be shy about letting the guys in your life know about this event—most of them have girlfriends or wives who want more friends, or they may know of a female friend who just moved to the area and doesn't know anyone. Ask them to help spread the word.
- 8. Post online everywhere.** Post in any online forums you belong to—there are always people online who want to meet offline (i.e. mom's boards, networking groups, women's organizations, meetup.com, craigslist.com)
- 9. Bookstores and libraries.** Ask your local bookstore and/or library if they help advertise book clubs.
- 10. Offer to your Clients/Customers/Readers/Community.** Depends on your business, but this could be a fabulous way to get to know your clients and help build some community for them through something they already all have in common. It can be an extra perk you offer while increasing brand loyalty.
- 11. Invite the neighbors.** Make up a flyer "It's time we met our neighbors. I'm hosting a book circle for any women on the block (on in the apartment building) who'd like to meet each other!"

# My Tips for Facilitators

Many of you are perhaps seasoned facilitators but I wanted to provide a quick list of tips to help ensure we're all facilitating the best conversations possible!

- **Your Focus:** Always remember that the focus isn't to impress those who come or to have a "perfect" party; but rather it is to help facilitate love and connection. I always say a prayer before everyone arrives "Help everyone who comes through that door to feel loved and seen." Exhale any worry about how others perceive you and instead focus on making sure everyone leaves feeling your warmth. People won't remember what was said or how you looked—they'll remember how they felt.
- **Timing:** I think it's respectful to start and end on time so I always plan out my evening starting from the end time. If I want to end by x time then I need to at the final question ten minutes before that, and so forth. I write in little suggested times throughout my itinerary so that at any given point I can quickly assess if I have extra time or am short on time—allowing me to make decisions about what to prioritize with the given time. Similarly, we need to think through how much time we want to allot for certain sections: For example, if you have 6 women all introducing themselves for 3 min each then it will take about 20 minutes to do introductions. Do you need to model a shorter introduction so it only takes 15 minutes?
- **Modeling:** Our role as facilitators is *not* to teach and monopolize the conversation but to help facilitate everyone else's sharing. Many people process the concepts as they talk and listen so we want to encourage the diversity of sharing from as many voices as possible. However, when it comes to going around the circle, I always share first to buy everyone time to think and to model vulnerability and timing. We want to keep our answer as short as we want everyone else's to be. We also want to answer with as much authenticity as possible as that gives permission to everyone else to answer with honesty as well. We are setting the tone: what you put out is what will get duplicated.
- **Format Variety:** You'll notice I mix up many different ways of facilitating, including: group discussion where anyone can talk, go around the circle where each person shares once, partners where two people share with each other, and small groups where the group is split into 2 or more smaller groups. This helps ensure that the talkative people don't monopolize the evening and that everyone gets chances to share and talk, it keeps everyone more engaged and prevents boredom, and helps people bond with different people. Follow my suggestions or experiment on your own as timing limitations and group personalities inspire you.
- **Beginning and Ending:** It's important to begin and end every group with circle sharing—everyone going around the circle to check-in and be seen. Be diligent about starting and ending well—with warmth, vision, and an invitation for everyone to enter and exit the circle with love and grace.
- **Names:** Nothing worse for bonding than not knowing each others names. Erase any fear anyone might have of not remembering someone's names by always reminding women to state their name when they talk if there is *any* chance that someone in the group may not remember or know everyone. I'd rather error on the side of saying names one too many times, than not enough times. When people are nervous it's



harder for them to recall names. Consider using name tags every week if it's a group of people who haven't all met before.

- **Responding to Sharing:** One pitfall of many groups is that they chase rabbits—one thought reminds someone of a story which triggers someone else to remember what they read once which gets someone else going on a rant. What we want to do is try to keep the focus on whoever's turn it is to talk (gently give the floor back to them if/after someone hijacks it—i.e. "Danielle... was there anything else you wanted to say about what you were sharing?) and try to keep the sharing on the question at hand (i.e. "oh that sounds so interesting... but in trying to answer this question specifically, what would you say?). I implement a "thank you for sharing" rule in most of my groups which means we are mindful that our collective jobs aren't to give advice, interrupt, or recall stories after someone's share but rather we just all say "Thank you for sharing!" before going to the next person so we can acknowledge we heard them without having to respond to all the details they shared. (Especially helpful in a "go around the circle" or "partner" format.)
- **Affirming:** One of the best gifts we can give is affirming our guests through the evening—reminding them we value them and see them. It can be as easy as saying "oh great thought!" after they share or as intentional as telling them what we appreciated about their involvement before they leave.
- **Logistics and Roles:** One of the most important roles we play as a facilitator is providing the container for the experience. The container includes overseeing logistics—location, reminders, clear instructions, etc. But it doesn't mean we have to do everything—provide food/drink or facilitate every time. It just means we'll make sure it happens. In fact, attendance is improved when people have a role—even if it's just to bring napkins. We are more likely to show up if we think our presence will be missed so more important than impressing everyone with doing it all is often our willingness to let go and let others. Maybe see if anyone else wants to facilitate different weeks (and share this guide with them!) or have everyone volunteer to bring different food items, or be in charge of different tasks (posting photos, starting a Facebook group page, or sending out reminders).

# Suggested Guide for 1x Discussion

- 1) Allow 10 to 20 minutes for mixing and mingling as everyone's arriving. (Consider name tags upon arrival if your attendees don't yet know each other.)
- 2) **Gather and Welcome Briefly**
- 3) **Group Introductions—everyone in the circle shares:**
  - a) Go around the circle: "In 2 minutes, tell us your name, why you were interested in discussing this book, and share with us 1-2 sentences from Part 1 (**chapters 1 & 2**) that really resonated with you or jumped out at you, and why."
    - *You go first to model it and give everyone else an extra minute to think about it. Remember to keep yours to 2 minutes as everyone else is likely to copy your length.*
    - *Make sure to keep the introductions moving, don't start commenting on each other's shares.*

- 4) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

In **chapter 3** Shasta defined frientimacy as "any friendship where two people feel *seen* in a way that feels *satisfying* and *safe* for both of them." Playing off the words seen, satisfying, and safe, she creates the Frientimacy Triangle that brings together the three requirements of friendship: positivity, consistency, and vulnerability. She says that friendship isn't how much two people like each other, but rather that it's how much those two people practice the behaviors that make-up a friendship.

Few of us have probably had a working definition of friendship in a way where we could actually measure whether the actions needed were present or not— In what way(s) is this was helpful to you? What did you learn? How might boiling friendship down to it's three essential ingredients help you and your friendships?

- 5) **Now, turn to one person next to you and share with each other for 3-4 minutes**

Depending upon which of the three requirements of friendship might feel most low in your friendships—which of the five intimacy gaps that Shasta highlights in **chapter 4** is most common in your friendships or that you're experiencing in a friendship right now? In other words, which of the five gaps feel most familiar to you? Why do you think that is?
- 6) **Now let's come back together and take a quick hand raising poll** (*Try to not take more than 2 minutes here to save yourself time later!*)
  - a) How many of you said Low- Positivity was the one you're most familiar with?
  - b) How many of you said Low Consistency/Low Vulnerability?
  - c) How many of you said Low Consistency/High Vulnerability?
  - d) How many of you said High Consistency/Low Vulnerability?
  - e) How many of you said High Consistency/High Vulnerability?

- 7) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

Based on which one which one of the five gaps is most common in your group (and which of the 3 friendship requirements is lowest), pick either chapter 5 that talks about positivity, chapter 6 that talks about consistency, or chapter 7 that talks about vulnerability to discuss with the group.

Based on which chapter you collectively picked, answer some of the following questions:

- a) Why do we think this friendship requirement is the most challenging for our group?
- b) What in Shasta's chapter on this subject might be helpful to us as we increase that area?

c) **Then connect with a new partner** and share with the other person, which of the Practices would be most helpful to you and why.

8) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

In **Chapter 8** (page 124) Shasta makes the statement:

"Pulling away isn't the path to intimacy; we have to stay loving and curious if we want to get there."

Why do you think this is so hard for so many of us? What are we most scared of? Why do we resist conflict or think it's so bad? How can you see that it's served both your own personal growth and your relationships?

9) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

In **chapters 9-13**, Shasta shares the **five fears** (mentioned on pg 122) that could be described as:

- (1) The fear of thinking you're not good enough (Doubting Our Self-Worth),
- (2) The fear that others think you're not good enough (Fear of Rejection)
- (3) The fear that others aren't good enough (Toxic Friend Trend)
- (4) The fear that others are too good (Jealousy and Envy)
- (5) The fear that others think you're too good (Holding Ourselves Back)

Which of those stages do you think is hardest for most people? Or, which one is hardest for you?

10) **Smaller Discussion Groups:**

Have everyone pick one of the five fears that they want to talk about more and get in a smaller group with those who also want to discuss that one (you could have up to five groups—one for each chapter; and you might only have 2 in one and 4 in another—that's okay! The goal is to get into small discussion groups)

In each group:

- 1) Discuss the Gentle Truth presented in your chapter. What stood out as important to understand?
- 2) Then have each person answer which of the 5 Courageous Actions in Chapter 12 feels most meaningful to them personally and why.

11) **Final Question—everyone shares:** Go around the circle, opposite the way you did introductions, and each person share briefly with everyone: If you had to pick one action that you are feeling more convicted to consider taking from reading this book —what is it?

12) **Logistic Wrap-Up-- 10 minutes before quitting time**

- a) Take a group photo with the girls and their books. Tweet, Facebook, and/or Instagram with #Frientimacy. (On Facebook, tag us at GirlFriendCircles.com)
- b) Make sure everyone knows how to connect with each other afterward—ask if you can share everyone's emails with the group?
- c) A Suggestion: Schedule your next get-together!
- d) Thank everyone for coming.

13) **To Close**

Ask someone to read aloud the Epilogue on page 235 titled "Friendships Can Save the World" and end with everyone saying, "may it be so!" ☺

# Suggested Guide for 4x Discussion

The following pages have a suggested outline for your 4 get-togethers.

- Week 1: Everyone read Chapters 1 & 2
- Week 2: Everyone read Chapters 3 & 4, divide the group up to each read one more chapter in Part Two: either 5, 6, or 7. (Everyone reads 3 chapters total).
- Week 3: Chapters 5-10
- Week 4: Chapters 11-13

Note: Each group will be unique based on how much time you've scheduled for your BookCircle, how many attendees you have, how talkative the members are, and how well your group knows each other, etc. The following is suggested, but feel free to skip questions or add your own. Pace yourself so 15 minutes before your end time you always have time for the last question and for wrap-up.

## 1st Week of Friendship Book Circle

**Arrival:** Allow 10 to 20 minutes for mixing and mingling as everyone's arriving. (Consider name tags upon arrival if your attendees don't yet know each other.)

### 1) **Gather and Welcome Briefly**

- a) Welcome & thank them for coming.
- b) Introduce yourself and tell them why you wanted to do this book discussion.
- c) Explain that we're only doing the first 2 chapters tonight, focusing on acknowledging and owning our Intimacy Gaps. At the end of our time together we'll get clear on upcoming chapters!

### 2) **Group Introductions—everyone in the circle shares:**

Go around the circle: "In 2-3 minutes, tell us your name, why you were interested in this book circle, and share with us one part of chapter 1 that resonated with you. (i.e. Something you underlined? Something that spoke to you? Something that surprised you? Something that described how you've felt before?)"

- *You go first to model it and give everyone else an extra minute to think about it. Remember to keep yours under 3 minutes as everyone else is likely to copy your length.*
- *Make sure to keep the introductions moving, don't start commenting on each other's shares or get off track from the introductions.*

### 3) **Next, get into smaller groups of 3's** (or 2's if under 5 people)

Share like Shasta did in the first two chapters, what ways you've possibly experienced an Intimacy Gap in your friendships—a gap between what you experience and what you have wished you were experiencing. What has it looked like for you, either now or recently?"

- *After about 5-6 minutes (possibly set a phone timer!), bring everyone back together, ask if 1-3 people are willing to share what they talked about in their small groups.*

### 4) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

- *Open these up for group discussion, but if a few people are doing all the talking, feel free to ask, "Does anyone else want to share?" Or, "X, we'd love to hear your observations if you want to share?"*

- *Depending upon how big/talkative your group is, you may only have time for 2 or 3 of these questions. You want to get to get to Question #6 within 25 minutes before your preferred ending time.*
  - a) In **chapter 1**, Shasta suggests we need to get more comfortable feeling and acknowledging our loneliness so that we can then better respond to getting our needs met. Why is this so hard for us and what do you think might help us move that direction?
  - b) In **chapter 2** Shasta uses the metaphor of exercise to talk about how we have to practice intimacy with others. Was this a helpful metaphor to you? How might our relationships look different if we believed that a little sweat wasn't something to avoid or that our emotional muscles have to be strengthened, too?
  - c) Shasta makes the statement in **chapter 2**: "We don't need better friends; we need better friendships." If that is true—what might some of the implications be? In other words, what would change about how we do friendship?
  - d) How does Shasta's invitation on pages 24 and 25 of **chapter 2** to "lower your standards" for new friends strike you? Does it make sense? Do you see how often you or others might expect too much from a new friendship?
- 5) **Final Question—everyone shares:** Go around the circle, opposite the way you did introductions, and each person share briefly with everyone: What is one take-away for you tonight? One thought, observation, action, or insight that you want to remember or act upon?
- 6) **Logistic Wrap-Up—15 minutes before quitting time**
  - a) Chapters for next week: We'll all read a total of 3 chapters from part 2 next week—everyone will read chapters 3 and 4, and then we'll divvy up chapters 5-7. So ask for 1/3 of the group to volunteer to read chapter 5 on positivity, 1/3 of them to read chapter 6 on consistency, and 1/3 of them to read chapter 7 on vulnerability. Everyone is welcome to read as much as they want, but each group will come and share their chapter with the others!
  - b) Tell them you're going to take a group photo after closing tonight.
  - c) Make sure everyone knows how to connect with each other afterward—ask if you can share everyone's emails with the group? Do you want to start a Facebook Group Page?
  - d) Thank everyone for coming.
- 7) **To Close**  
Ask someone to read aloud the sidebar on page 17 titled "You, Me, and Us" and end with everyone saying, "may it be so!" 😊

**Take Photo:** with the girls and their books. Tweet, Facebook, and/or Instagram with #Friintimacy. (On Facebook, tag us at GirlFriendCircles.com)



## 2nd Week of Frientimacy Book Circle

### 1) **Gather and Welcome Briefly**

- a) Welcome & thank them for coming.
- b) We're discussing chapters 3-7 tonight. Just a reminder that we all read chapters 3 and 4 and then we divvied up chapters 5-7.

### 2) **Group Introductions—everyone in the circle shares:**

In just 1-2 minutes, introduce yourself to the group and share one example of a way you either experienced frientimacy this week or observed yourself making a choice to lean into greater frientimacy with someone.

- *You share first to model it and give everyone else an extra minute to think about it. Remember to keep yours under 3 minutes as everyone else is likely to copy your length.*
- *Make sure to keep the introductions moving, don't start commenting on each other's shares or get off track from the introductions, simply say "Thanks for sharing" and move to the next person.*

### 3) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

In **Chapter 3** Shasta defined frientimacy as "any friendship where two people feel *seen* in a way that feels *satisfying* and *safe* for both of them." Playing off the words seen, satisfying, and safe, she creates the Frientimacy Triangle that brings together the three requirements of friendship: positivity, consistency, and vulnerability. She says that friendship isn't how much two people like each other, but rather that it's how much those two people practice the behaviors that make-up a friendship.

Few of us have probably had a working definition of friendship in a way where we could actually measure whether the actions needed were present or not— In what way(s) is this was helpful to you? Does it make sense to you?

### 4) **Now, turn to one person next to you** and share with each other which of the 3 requirements feels most present and fulfilling in your friendships right now and which ones feels most challenging or low right now? Let's just take 2-3 minutes for both people to share.

### 5) **Now let's come back together and take a quick hand raising poll** (Try to not take more than 2 minutes here to save yourself time later!)

- a) How many of you said positivity was the one you'd most like to increase?
- b) How many of you said consistency was the one you'd most like to increase?
- c) How many of you said vulnerability was the one you'd most like to increase?

### 6) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share** (ask one or all of the questions to generate 5 minutes of debriefing.)

- a) Why do you think x was the most common answer for our group?
- b) Do you think x is the area that culture, in general, struggles with the most?
- c) Was your answer a surprise to you in any way? Why or why not?

In **chapter 4** Shasta spelled out different ways we might experience the Gaps that can happen when these three requirements get out of balance. But to make sure we really understand what these three things are, let's move into our reports from those who read either chapter 5, 6, or 7.

### 7) **Split time for reports:**

- a) Invite everyone to move to sit next to others who read the same chapter (5, 6, or 7). Give each group 3-5 minutes to discuss what they think the three most helpful take-away's from that chapter that they want to share with the larger group.
  - b) *Timing Issue: Work backward from what time you need to end, minus 10 minutes for your wrap-up, and see how much time you have left. Divide that time into 3 sections and set a timer where each group can present their take-aways from their chapter during their time. They can take turns sharing and answering questions as long as they have time. When the buzzer goes off-time for the next group!*
- 8) **Final Question—everyone shares—15 minutes before quitting time:** Go around the circle, opposite the way you did introductions, and each person share briefly with everyone: What is one take-away for you tonight? One thought, observation, action, or insight that you want to remember or act upon?
- 9) **Logistic Wrap-Up**
- a) Chapters for next week: We'll all read chapters 8-10 for our next discussion.
  - b) Any details for next week??
  - c) Thank everyone for coming.
- 10) **To Close**  
Ask someone to read aloud the last paragraph on page 55 and the following paragraph on page 56—from "In other words," to the end of that section, ending with "that we already share" as an invitation to hold contentment as we leave this evening. ☺

**Post any photos** with the girls and their books. Tweet, Facebook, and/or Instagram with #Friendimacy. (On Facebook, tag us at GirlFriendCircles.com)

# 3rd Week of Friendship Book Circle

## 1) **Gather and Welcome Briefly**

- a) Welcome & thank them for coming.
- b) We're discussing chapters 8-10 tonight.

## 2) **Group Introductions—everyone in the circle shares:**

So Shasta's favorite sharing question is what she calls a "high/low" and we're going to do it this week as a way to practice the 3 requirements of friendship: positivity, consistency, and vulnerability! Go around the circle: "In 2 minutes, tell us your name again and share with us one highlight from this last week and one lowlight. A highlight might be a good decision you've made, something you've achieved, a meaningful conversation you had, etc. It can be anything that made you happy. A lowlight might be something that caused stress, a tough conversation you had, a frustrating experience, or something you've just been worrying about. It can be anything that felt sad, stressful, or frustrating."

- *You share first to model it and give everyone else an extra minute to think about it. Remember to keep yours under 3 minutes as everyone else is likely to copy your length.*
- *Make sure to keep the introductions moving, don't start commenting on each other's shares or get off track from the introductions, simply say "Thanks for sharing" and move to the next person.*

## 3) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

In **Chapter 8** (page 124) Shasta makes the statement:

"Pulling away isn't the path to intimacy; we have to stay loving and curious if we want to get there."

Why do you think this is so hard for so many of us? What are we most scared of? Why do we resist conflict or think it's so bad? How can you see that it's served both your own personal growth and your relationships?

## 4) **Now, let's break into groups of 3 for a couple of moments**

When you look at the list on page 126 of some of the examples of how our friendships are health clubs for our personal growth... Which one are you being invited to practice right now? (Or feel free to share one that's not on the list!)

## 5) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

What is helpful to you about being reminded of Scott Peck's 4 Stages of Relationship: Pseudo-Community, Chaos, Emptiness, and True Community? What jumped out at you when reading about the normality of frustration as part of intimacy?

## 6) **Popcorn Sharing**

- a) Switching now to Chapters 9 and 10—the chapters that cover two huge fears: The Fear that We Don't Think We're Good Enough and The Fear that We Don't Think Others Think We're Good Enough; let's take x minutes on each chapter and take turns sharing what statements or concepts resonated with us and why. Start by telling us what page you're on in Chapter 9, what jumped out at you, and why it matters to you. Then, someone else can share theirs.
- b) *Timing Issue: Work backward from what time you need to end, minus 10 minutes for your wrap-up, and see how much time you have left. Divide that time into 2 sections and set a timer for*

*each chapter. When the timer goes off—do the same thing with Chapter 10, but consider inviting those who didn't get a chance to share on Chapter 9 to be the first to share something on Chapter 10.*

- 7) **Final Question—everyone shares—15 minutes before quitting time:** Go around the circle, taking turns telling the person to your left one thing about them that you've appreciated them adding to the group time. Then that person shares with the person to their left, until everyone has been affirmed.
  
- 11) **Logistic Wrap-Up**
  - a) Chapters for next week: We'll all read our final 3 chapters for our next discussion.
  - b) Any details for next week??
  - c) Thank everyone for coming.
  
- 12) **To Close**

Invite everyone to open their books to page 135 and read aloud together the first sentence of the final paragraph: "Leaning in to intimacy is not a road of weakness but one of strength—a journey not for the faint of heart but for the deep of heart." And afterwards you can say, "May that be true of all of us." ☺

**Post any photos** with the girls and their books. Tweet, Facebook, and/or Instagram with #Frientimacy. (On Facebook, tag us at GirlFriendCircles.com)

# 4th Week of Friendship Book Circle

1) **Gather and Welcome Briefly**

- a) Welcome & thank them for coming.
- b) We're discussing chapters 11-13 tonight—it's our last night with this book.

2) **Group Introductions—everyone in the circle shares:**

Go around the circle: "In 2 minutes, start with your name, then share for a moment what you've most appreciated about this journey over the last number of weeks as you've all met to discuss deeper friendships.

- *You go first to model it and give everyone else an extra minute to think about it. Remember to keep yours under 2 minutes as everyone else is likely to copy your length.*
- *Make sure to keep the introductions moving, don't start commenting on each other's shares or get off track from the introductions.*

3) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

- a) **Chapter 11** jumps right in with addressing our fear of others—namely the "Toxic Friend Trend." Consider this statement:

"The question isn't whether we should let needy or depressed people into our lives—we do, and we should. Rather, the question is *how much* we let them in, and for what purpose."

What does this mean? How might this change the expectations we have of different people?

4) **Next, pair up with someone next to you to answer:**

Which of the 5 Courageous Actions in Chapter 11 feels most meaningful to you personally and why.

- *After about 3-4 minutes (possibly set a phone timer!), bring everyone back together, ask if 1-3 people are willing to share what they talked about in their small groups.*

5) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

- a) **Chapter 12** highlights the difference between Jealousy and Envy and then between two different types of each. What are these four types?

What was most helpful to you about seeing the difference between these four types?

6) **Next, pair up with the person on the other side of you (new partner) to answer:**

Which of the 5 Courageous Actions in Chapter 12 feels most meaningful to you personally and why.

- *After about 3- 4 minutes (possibly set a phone timer!), bring everyone back together, ask if 1-3 people are willing to share what they talked about in their small groups.*

7) **Group Discussion—whoever wants to share**

- a) **Chapter 13** talks about the side of jealousy that often goes unspoken—the fear of having others jealous of us. Let's talk for a few moments about whether it's easier for each of us to dim (and play a smaller game or downplay our success or happiness) or, as Shasta says, risk acting like we don't give a damn. How do you relate to this issue?



- 8) **Next, pair up with the person on the opposite side of the circle (new partner) to answer:**  
Which of the 5 Courageous Actions in Chapter 13 feels most meaningful to you personally and why.
- *After about 3- 4 minutes (possibly set a phone timer!), bring everyone back together, ask if 1-3 people are willing to share what they talked about in their small groups.*
- 9) **Final Question—everyone shares:** Go around the circle, opposite the way you did introductions, and each person share briefly with everyone: If you had to pick one action that you are feeling more convicted to consider taking from reading this book —what is it?
- 10) **Logistic Wrap-Up—10 minutes before quitting time**
- a) A Suggestion: Schedule your next get-together! Does your group want to keep meeting weekly? Or do you just want to meet at a restaurant for dinner in a few weeks? Always schedule the next one to keep up the consistency!
  - b) Make sure everyone knows how to connect with each other afterward—ask if you can share everyone's emails with the group? Do you want to start a Facebook Group Page?
  - c) Thank everyone for coming.
- 11) **To Close**  
Ask someone to read aloud the Epilogue on page 235 titled "Friendships Can Save the World" and end with everyone saying, "may it be so!" 😊

# Additional Questions

Use these questions if your group has extra time one week, if you want to swap out a question from the suggested guides, or if you want to keep the conversation going online!

## Chapters 1-2

- If you scored your level of satisfaction with your current level of frientimacy—the depth and meaningfulness of your friendships—what number would you give between 1-10 and why? (page 5)
- What do you think of Shasta's definition of loneliness that it's simply information that our hearts are ready to feel more connection with others, much the way our bodies tell us when we're hungry or tired or thirsty? (page 8)
- Has loneliness been a word you are uncomfortable with? Why or why not? How do you think our comfort level in acknowledging our need impacts our ability to respond to it?
- What's an example of a time in your life where you felt a gap--the dissonance between where you were and where you wanted to be? How did it motivate you? (page 14-15)
- What are all the ways we can identify where the metaphor of intimacy as exercise could help us view our relationships with less resistance? (page 10-20)
- While most of us are tempted to see the others as responsible for our dissatisfaction – like Shasta did with her friends in chapter 1; can you think of an example where you might be able to look at it differently and see your own role in the dissatisfaction—like Shasta did in chapter 2?

## Chapters 3-7

- How would you describe the difference between friendships, in general, vs. those we develop frientimacy with? (chapter 3)
- Let's unpack Shasta's definition of frientimacy found on the bottom of page 32. How is this helpful or clarifying to you? How's it different than how most of us talk about friendship?
- What ah-ha's came to you as read about how the Frientimacy Triangle works? (pages 41-44)
- Which of the 5 Intimacy Gaps do you think is most prevalent in culture and why? (chapter 4)
- How might being able to see these 5 Intimacy Gaps help inform me in my friendships? What's an example you can share? (chapter 4)
- Were you surprised at Shasta's findings that most women feel like givers in their friendships and have a tendency to feel like they do more than others? Why or why not? (chapter 5)
- Which of the five Obstacles to our Giving resonated most with you? Which one is the one you're most likely to experience when you feel maxed out? (pages 59-64)
- Knowing the Positivity Ratio of 5:1—how could you see that impacting your relationships? (page 64)
- Shasta suggests that sometimes it may not be that we over-give as much as it may be that we under-receive. Do you agree or not? Why? If so, why is it so hard for us to admit our need, ask for help, or soak up what others can give us? (last half of Chapter 5)

- Which of the 8 Vital Friends Roles do you think you primarily play if you had to pick one? And give us an example why! (page 73)
- If the research is true that our relationships bring us more joy than our finances, why do you think we've set up our lives to center around our careers and acquisitions? Do you think we should change something? If so, what? (page 82-84)
- Which of the 4 practices for Investing in our Priority of Others speaks to you? Which one could you see improving your relationships if you were to practice it? (last half of chapter 6)
- Looking at the Initiator Mantra on page 93—how easy or hard is this for you to believe and why? What has been your experiencing with initiating?
- How does Shasta's teaching on vulnerability change how you've often viewed or practiced vulnerability? (chapter 7)
- Has being vulnerable been easy or challenging for you? Why do you think that is? (i.e. past experience? modeling from parents? personality?)
- Which of the five actions in Shasta's Vulnerability Compass do you most need to practice in your friendships? Why? (last half of chapter 7)
- On page 114, Shasta shares some ways to help increase the Shining in our friendships... let's go around the circle and practice by each taking a moment to tell everyone else something we did this past week that makes us feel proud or accomplished!

### **Chapter 8-10**

- Do you agree or disagree with Shasta's analysis that we tend to want to upgrade the people in our lives more easily than want to do the hard work of improving the actual relationships in our lives? (chapter 8)
- What is your default response when a friend disappoints? Do you tend to speak up or go quiet and put up with it? (chapter 8)
- Which of the bullet points on page 126 do you most want to practice in your friendships in the upcoming year?
- Split into pairs and let's practice Shasta's 4 steps to confronting a friend: expressing love, validating feelings, removing blame, and requesting willingness. The first person gives an example of a time she's felt frustrated with a friend (the 1 min version!) and the other practices what she'd say if she were in that situation; then switch positions. (page 133)
- Shasta posed the question on page 139: Do you love yourself more today than you did 5 years ago? How do you personally measure that? And what has helped or hurt that process for you?
- Which of the three Courageous Actions for being your own best friend is the hardest one for you to practice and why? (last half of chapter 9)
- Do you agree with the statement: "It's human to want to belong." Why or why not? (page 164)
- How do you see the fear of rejection most show up in your life? What settings of types of people provoke it most? (chapter 10, some examples on pg 166)
- Shasta shared on page 171 what a huge impact the statement "To defend is to attack" had on her. What does that mean to you? (page 171-172)

## Chapters 11-13

- In your opinion, what are the downsides of calling people toxic? (chapter 11)
- Chapter 11 speaks to learning how to be in relationship with people who aren't perfect, touching on the Frank Andrews quote that Shasta chose for the opening page of her book: *"It seems impossible to love people who hurt and disappoint us, yet there are no other kinds of people."* If this is true—how does it inform your life?
- Shasta shares the Enneagram personal growth model that suggests we all have a range of personal health where we tend to function from, and that we might tend to view ourselves residing in our higher range and remember others actions when they reside in their lower range. Why do you think that might be? What impact does this have on our friendships? (page 181)
- On page 188 we are challenged to rethink the word "needy." What could that look like? What would be different if we weren't afraid of needs? What might we have to do to reframe it?
- How do you think someone might best be able to tell if their jealousy is reliable or unreliable? (page 197-198)
- Do you think someone has a choice in whether they feel resenting or applauding envy? What makes the biggest difference, in your opinion, as to which one someone feels? (page 198)
- In the first Practice for Cheering, Not Competing, Shasta points out that when we have conflicting emotions, we might tend to think our negative emotions are more honest than our positive emotions. Why do you think that is? (page 200)
- In Practice #2 of Practice for Cheering, Not Competing, we're challenged to befriend someone who you think has it all, or at least has what you want. When have you done this? How did it feel? What did you learn? (page 202-203)
- Have you ever admitted to a friend when you've felt jealous of them? How did you do it? How did it feel? What happened? (page 205-207)
- What is a time you felt you had to dim your light in order to fit in or be liked? (chapter 13)
- What could you personally do to help more women not feel like they have to dim their lights in order to be liked? (chapter 13)