



REFLECTION THOUGHTS

Points to remember:

1. Not everyone understands suffering and knows how to support their friends through it - that can be painful and it is okay to grieve the loss or change in friendships.
 2. Remember that someone's lack of support, ignorance of how to support, or lack of capacity to support effectively does not reflect on your worth or value.
- Are you in a season of needing to **limit** or **expand** your support?

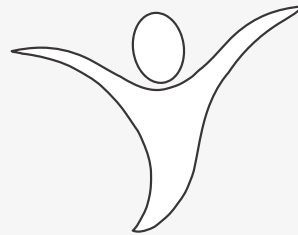


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CULTIVATING FRIENDSHIPS

RESOURCES & REFLECTIVE GUIDES

How do you cultivate healthy relationships in the midst of suffering? Relationships will change when you are going through intense seasons of suffering - you may need to consider limiting and/or expanding your support system, based on your current needs.



EXPANDING

- Find a friend who has experienced suffering in a similar way and "gets it,"
- Join a support group
- Go to therapy
- Reach out to your community for specific ways they can help
- Cultivate an inner circle of a people who know the ins and outs of your experience



LIMITING

- Accept that you may not have capacity for all of the people you once kept up with (give yourself grace)
- Set new boundaries with people (eg: no need to share the ins and outs with everyone)
- Know that the work you are doing to be present and engaged with the closest people in your life matters - it is okay to "cocoon" or circle the wagons for this season.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who are people in your life who need you as your village?



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RELATIONSHIP MAP: KNOW YOUR VILLAGE

Who are your people? How can you rely on your village? Take a moment and reflect on who you would place into each of these circles. What relationships do you want to prioritize and cultivate?

MIDDLE CIRCLE

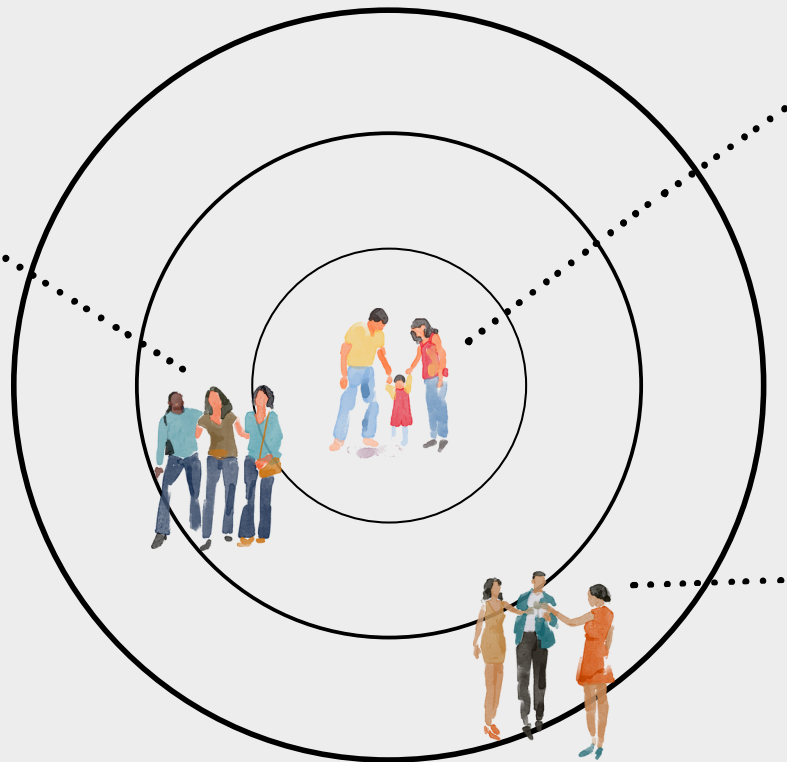
Approximately 8-10 people (friends, people in your community) who you can support mutually and you can share day-to-day life with.

INNER CIRCLE

2-5 people who you trust and who KNOW you more intimately (mess included).

OUTER CIRCLE

Acquaintances who still impact your life, but who are not as intricately involved.



- Who do you need in your village?
- What can feel discouraging/challenging/a barrier when you create this list? What can feel encouraging/hopeful?
- What is one practical thing you can do this week to pursue someone in your village?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Identify areas of need for support.
- What surprised you about this activity?
- What will you take away with you after doing this activity?



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FAMILY ACTIVITY: EMOTIONAL MAD LIB

As you sit around the dinner table or seek to build in a new rhythm with your family during the week, use this

This week at home (or at work) I was
busy with _____
and I felt _____.

I think I felt that way
because _____.

I wish that _____
would happen.

Very few people know that _____
is happening in my _____.

I need _____
but I am afraid to ask for it.

I am afraid to open up
because _____.

The greatest way I could be loved
right now is _____.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When you hear the word "forgiveness" what comes to mind? Which people come to mind (perhaps you have/need to forgive, or people who have forgiven you)?
- How has your season of illness or grief impacted your ability to forgive?
- How could you see forgiveness making an impact in your life?



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THE ROAD OF FORGIVENESS

As you consider your village of support and relationships in your life, perhaps there may be areas where you see the need to invite forgiveness into certain friendships in order to cultivate better support. Consider these questions:



1- THE SIGNS

Where do I see bitterness or resentment?

This is a clear sign that something needs to be addressed.



3- MY COST

Realistically, what is the cost to me?
How is my life different as a result of the offender's actions?



2- THE DEBT

What, specifically, was lost or taken?
I need to name it.



4- LETTING GO

What does it look like to release the offender and move forward?



5- MY OWN NEED

From what might I need to seek forgiveness?
And from whom?