

4 Ways I'm Building Intentional Friendships

I want intentional friendships that are deep, reliable, and life-giving. To get those kinds of friendships, I need spend time with my friends that isn't just "hanging out".

Here are four ways I'm building intentional friendships in my life right now:

1. Book club(s)

If you care about ideas and personal growth, you want your friends to be along for the ride. Bring your friends to a book club, or else make your friends at one. As long as the book is compelling and thought-provoking (ours is – Jordan Peterson's *12 Rules for Life*), you're going to have plenty of opportunities to speak your mind and hear the minds of others. And from there – interesting ideas – you can go anywhere you want. You can crack great jokes, share great stories, impart wisdom, or have useful debates.

2. Goal accountability group

I and four other good friends from around North America (the two Canadians living in Mexico provide our international representation) meet every week on a video call. We talk about successes, improvement areas, goals, and ways we can give mutual support. By meeting together and occasionally chatting via a message app over the rest of the week, we can hold each other to more accountability for getting the things done that we know need our attention (building email lists, keeping morning routines, etc).

And we have a blast, too.

3. Church small group

There's an idea in Christianity that people should treat each other like brothers and sisters. That makes a church group an interesting context for friendship building. If you're meeting with people who are at least rational, humane, and open (and if you're in a religious tradition that follows those tendencies), you may also get the benefit of a safe intimacy which is rare elsewhere.

When my group meets up, it's usually meeting to discuss a book we're reading, which probably has some out of the box ideas on Christian spirituality (this is where I read *The Naked Now* by Franciscan friar Richard Rohr). But unlike with book clubs, we're a more durable fellowship. We help each other move. We meet up on the weekends. We play games together. (Occasionally) we volunteer together.

At our best, we share our shortcomings and rough edges with each other. We talk through

life challenges together. We challenge each other to improve. And we encourage each other week to week.

4. Philosophy movie nights

This is probably the friendship-builder I'm most excited about right now I got a projector for Christmas 2017, and I'm now finally able to show some of my favorite films. Film is a great medium for philosophical topics, and movies are a great reason to invite friends over and eat pizza together.

After a couple of the films I've shown I've had an excellent opportunity to dive into philosophical topics with friends from across my friend groups. *The Lion King* gave us an opportunity to talk about mercy (and the surprising cultural prevalence of the idea). *Saving Private Ryan* gave us an opportunity to talk about human psychology and the ethics of the military.

Up next we're watching *Les Misérables*. I can't wait – these are inexpensive, laid back, inspiring parties for people who love ideas and stories both.