

Making Deep Friendships in a Kiddy Pool World

Sick of spending all of your nights alone on the couch? No one to call, no one calling you. Nobody who cares how your day *actually* went or what your work crush may or may not have said to you on the elevator. No one motivating you to clean your home. No one to get concerned about the increasingly embarrassing amount of doritos you consume on a daily basis...

Sure, you know people. You go to work everyday and on your daily coffee runs. You make eye contact with people on the street and even smile and hold the occasional door.

But let's face it: there's a difference between knowing people and being known by people. And that difference becomes very evident when you find yourself sitting alone on your couch for the 125th night in a row shoveling doritos into your already cheese caked face.

You see, knowing someone relies only on facts. You could list off their name, their hair color, the kind of car they drive, the name of their brother; and if you're really observant, maybe even how they like their coffee or what kind of style they have. But, that kind of relationship ends with facts. Sharp and abrupt. And that's the problem, there's no emotion in fact.

Emotion is the wall that hardly gets crossed, especially with an increasingly virtual, data driven world. It is also the wall that guards your access to real, deep friendship, love, and connection. It takes crossing that wall to get to what you're longing for.

So how do you do it? How do you cross that wall between know and known? In a world as shallow as a kiddy pool, how do you take off the floaties and dive deep into real, meaningful relationships?

To answer these questions I have searched high and low to find *real* women, who were *really* there just a year ago - alone, on the couch, with cheese face... yes you get it - and were able to completely transform their loneliness into knowingness.

Joanna Dunn is a 21 year old professional who moved from Massachusetts to Nashville a little under a year ago. She was out of school and moved in search of a fresh start and a change of environment. "I didn't know anyone when I got here," said Dunn, "and it was really scary and lonely, especially for the first month."

Without the automatic community of a college campus, Joanna had to go out on her own to make friends. "I forced myself to get plugged into communities centered around my values in hopes of meeting like-minded people" said Dunn. Joanna did this by finding a local church to attend and by hanging out in the common areas of her apartment building.

This is the biggest lesson to learn when looking for friends: do the things that are important to you. If you're **into** nature, go on some hikes! If you're a gym girlie, go take some classes! If you're **into** shopping, go to the mall! Put yourself in the places where you will meet like-minded people. You can't expect to meet your next shopaholic bestie if you're staying home alone on your couch, you've gotta be where they're at.

Next, I'd like to introduce you to now-besties, Maria and Sosa. They both moved here for grad school and knew absolutely no one before moving-in. "We met on Bumble BFFs," said Sosa, "as embarrassing as that is to admit." The two wanted to make connections with people so they put themselves out there and made Bumble BFF accounts.

"The real key is consistency," said Amber, a community group leader at The Belonging Co. "You can't expect to develop a real community if you aren't putting in consistent effort."

No matter how you meet people, whether it's organic or set up through the offshoot of a dating app, you have to be consistent and available if you want to move your friendships to the next level. This takes vulnerability and requires you to let someone know that you care about them... cringe.

But the cringe is so worth it! It can be scary letting your guard down, but that's what you've got to do if you truly wanna be known.

If you're reading this and are thinking, "yes Alyssa, I need to do this but have absolutely no idea where to find like-minded women in Nashville" Never fear! *9 to 5 in the 615* provides some pretty freaking awesome opportunities to connect with the coolest young women in Nashville. Check out our website to find our monthly member calendar with events like Sissy Spin Nights, Tipsy Trivia Trips and Boojie Bestie Brunches! Anyone and everyone is welcome to join our glowing and growing community.

So what're you doing? Get off your ass and eat some cheese with your soon-to-be besties, you gorgeous gorgeous girl.

Xoxo Alyssa Sotiros