

ARE WE FRIENDS YET?



A Reading Guide for the Workplace

*Belonging at work, and the connections that make a hard
week survivable and a good one genuinely good.*

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START HERE



FOR TEAMS & WORKPLACES

Most of us spend more waking hours with our coworkers than with almost anyone else, and yet "work friend" is often where connection quietly stops. We are friendly. We are professional. We share a calendar. But a real sense of belonging, the kind that makes a hard week survivable and a good one genuinely good, is rarer than it should be.

This guide takes *Are We Friends Yet?* and points it at the place you work. It is for teams reading together, for managers and people leaders who want a different kind of conversation, for employee groups, and for anyone who suspects that connection at work is not a perk but a load-bearing wall.

A quick promise and a quick warning: belonging cannot be mandated, and it definitely cannot be forced in a meeting. Nothing here asks anyone to overshare or to perform vulnerability on command. The questions are an invitation, not an assignment.

How to Use This Guide

Each chapter offers a quote from the book and a few questions. Some are personal, meant for your own reflection. Some are for the group, about how you connect as a team. You do not need to get through all of them. Pick the ones that spark something real.

- **Make it safe.** Sharing is always optional. The fastest way to kill connection is to make people feel cornered. Let people pass.
- **Leaders go first, and go human.** If you are facilitating, model the kind of honesty you are hoping for, then get out of the way.
- **Separate the personal from the team.** Personal questions are for individual reflection. Team questions are worth talking through out loud, and then doing something about.
- **Aim for one good conversation,** not full coverage. Thirty honest minutes beats a rushed hour.



QUESTIONS FOR CONNECTION AT WORK

Move through the chapters as your group reads, or jump to the ones that fit where your team is right now. A few questions per chapter is plenty.

CHAPTER 1

Recognizing Your Current Reality

“Friendships should feel good.”

- When you think about connection at work, what feels good right now, and what feels like a struggle?
- Do you have someone here you could go to on a genuinely hard day? What makes that possible, or what gets in the way?
- *As a team:* where do we actually feel connected, and where are we just coworkers sharing a calendar?

CHAPTER 2

Defining Your Boundaries

“Boundaries are the secret to building fulfilling connections that feel easy.”

- The book reframes boundaries as bridges that show people how to connect with you best. What is one boundary that would make you a more sustainable colleague, not a worse one?
- Where do you say yes when you mean no at work, and what does that cost you by Friday?
- *As a team:* what expectations do we have of each other that we have never actually said out loud?

CHAPTER 3

Getting a Better Handle on Your Time

“It’s not about whether or not you are using your time efficiently; it’s about whether you are using your time in ways that bring meaning to your life.”

- It’s easy to believe we are using our time one way, only to find out it’s not the reality. It’s also easy to spend time on activities that aren’t fulfilling. Where does your work time actually go, versus where you wish it went?
- What is one small pocket of the day you could protect for a real conversation instead of another meeting?
- *As a team:* are there rituals that drain us that we keep doing out of pure habit?

CHAPTER 4

Building Strong Friendship Habits

“We don’t typically think of friendship as an area of our life built on habits, but it is.”

- What is one connection habit you could stack onto something you already do (coffee, standup, the commute, a recurring call)?
- Are you usually the one who reaches out to colleagues, or the one who waits to be included? How is that working?
- *As a team:* what is one low-effort, recurring ritual that would make it easier to actually know each other?

CHAPTER 5

The Three Fundamental Stages of Friendship

“All friendships start because you meet a person in a place. It’s that simple.”

- “All friendships start because you meet a person in a place.” Where at work do you have the chance to meet people, and are you using it?
- Not every colleague needs to be a close friend. Which work relationships feel right exactly at the level they are?
- *As a team:* how does a new person actually get woven in here, or do we leave that to chance?

CHAPTER 6

Shared Experience Roots

“Not everyone has to be a close friend to bring value to your life.”

- Frequency and consistency build connection. Which colleague do you already have a natural rhythm with, and who would you like one with?
- What low-stakes shared thing (lunch, a walk, a side project) has actually brought you closer to someone here?
- *As a team:* what shared experiences genuinely bond us, beyond the work itself?

CHAPTER 7

Emotional Intimacy Roots

“Moments are fleeting. Memories last.”

- Small intimacies are tiny, low-risk moments of letting someone in. What is one you could offer a colleague this week?
- When has a coworker let you in, even a little, and how did it change the relationship?
- *As a team:* is it safe to be a bit human here, or do we keep everything at the surface?

CHAPTER 8

Story Roots

“Our beliefs are often the reason we take action.”

- What beliefs do you carry about your coworkers (“they are reliable,” “they do not care”), and where did that evidence come from?
- Have you been disappointed by someone at work lately? Is it possible the expectation, more than the person, is the thing to revisit?
- *As a team:* what stories do we tell about each other, and are they still true?

CHAPTER 9

Recognizing Your People

“You are the center of an interconnected web of humans.”

- The Wheel of Connection counts colleagues, mentors, and acquaintances as real parts of your support web. How big a part does work play in yours right now?
- Is there a kind of work connection (a peer, a mentor, a friend across departments) that is fuller or emptier than you realized?
- *As a team:* who tends to fall through the cracks here, and who is well held?

CHAPTER 10

Building Your Support System

“We are not meant to move through life alone. We are social creatures.”

- The book swaps keeping score for nourishment. Where are you quietly keeping score at work, and what would change if you stopped?
- Are you more comfortable offering help or asking for it here? What is behind that?
- *As a team:* do we make it genuinely easy to ask for help, or does asking still feel risky?

CHAPTER 11

Understanding How Our Connections Grow and Change

“What holds our friendships and relationships together is constantly changing, and we are scrambling to adjust without always understanding what is happening.”

- Work relationships shift when roles, projects, and teams change. Which connection has shifted on you lately, and can you name what actually changed?
- Is there a working relationship that has quietly grown stronger that you could name and appreciate?
- *As a team:* when someone leaves or moves on, do we tend that change, or just absorb it and move forward?

CHAPTER 12

Nurturing Your Relationships

“No friendship is maintenance free—and don’t forget, maintenance can be mutually beneficial!”

- No relationship is maintenance free. Which work relationship is worth a little intentional tending from you right now?
- What is one specific, doable way you could show up for a colleague this month?
- *As a team:* which relationships across our group are worth investing in, and how would we actually do it?

CHAPTER 13

Reimagining Your Community

“You only stop making new friends when you are in the grave.”

- “You only stop making new friends when you are in the grave.” Where is there an opening to build new connection at work that you have been overlooking?
- Relationships do not have to be all or nothing. Is there a colleague you have written off who could be a good connection at a different level?
- *As a team:* what would it look like to widen who counts as “us” around here?

CHAPTER 14

Learning to Let Go

“Different isn’t bad; it’s just different.”

- Different is not bad, it is just different. Is there a work relationship you are holding to how it used to be?
- Have you grieved a work friendship that faded when someone changed roles or left? How did you handle it?
- *As a team:* how could we let go of old ways of working, or of people moving on, with more grace and less guilt?

CHAPTER 15

Embracing the Future and Taking Action

“Trust that small actions add up.”

- What is one small, imperfect step you could take this week to strengthen a connection at work?
- The book is about consistency over grand gestures. What is one connection habit you could actually keep?
- *As a team:* what is one thing we will each commit to, and how will we check in on it?

CHAPTER BONUS CHAPTER

Bonus Chapter: Back to the Basics

“Little shifts count. Big shifts count.”

- Little shifts count. What is one small thing that has already changed in how you connect at work?
- What is one connection here you want to keep investing in, and what is your next step?



ONE LAST THING

If this conversation felt a little unusual, that is the point. Most workplaces never make space to talk about connection as if it matters, even though it quietly shapes whether people stay, contribute, and feel like themselves at work.

You do not need a program or a budget to change the temperature of a team. You need a few people willing to show up a little more honestly, a little more consistently. That is it. That is the whole thing.

Thanks for bringing this conversation into the room. That is where it starts.

Bring This to Your Whole Team

Alex Alexander is a Connection Strategist who helps teams treat belonging as a system, not just a feeling. Her keynote, *The Support System Playbook*, and her interactive workshops give your people a shared language and two or three frameworks they can put to use that same week. A strong fit for corporate well-being events, leadership retreats, and ERGs.

See the keynote, workshops, and formats at alexalexander.com/speaking.

Keep It Going Inside Your Organization

The conversation does not have to end when the meeting does. Alex offers ways to weave connection into your culture year-round:

- **Licensed HR materials and facilitator guides** for your ongoing development programs.
- **Slack prompts** that keep connection top of mind between meetings.
- A **private podcast series** for your team, like ongoing coaching delivered straight to their earbuds.
- **Bulk copies of the book**, signed, with discounts for teams.

Tell Alex what your organization needs at alexalexander.com/work-with-me, or email directly at alex@alexalexander.com.