



*Shasta Nelson*

CIRCLES OF CONNECTEDNESS  
WORKSHEET  
FOR PERSONAL EVALUATION



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# Summary

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As discussed at length in *Friendships Don't Just Happen!*, The “Five Circles of Connectedness” helps us see which circles most need our attention for relational fulfillment.

The Continuum begins on the left with the most casual of friends and moves to the right as the bond and commitment deepens. While there are some parameters to each circle, much of it will be subjective based on your own sense of bond.



# 01

## Contact Friends

We are friendly whenever we see them, but we don't see them much outside of our shared context. We are linked to them because we share something in common—we attend the same church, went to school together, both know the same mutual friend, or play together on a local sports team. Contact Friends are not the same as “all acquaintances,” though. While we may know the names of all twenty people in our association meeting or at church, these are the 2 or 3 that we gravitate to when we see them in that context.

### *Shasta's Circles of Connectedness*



# 02

## Common Friends

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We intentionally spend time with these friends, getting to know them more, but our friendship is still based primarily on one shared commonality. The bond can develop because we see each other in a weekly moms' group, are working on a shared project, sing in the same choir, or belong to the same club, or because we are frequently in the same social circle. But we are more than Contact Friends because we are initiating time together, having long conversations, and seeing each other on purpose.

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Confirmed Friends is next on the continuum, and I'll return to this Circle in a minute: There are two things that begin to shift when we cross that center Circle: (1) the **regularity** with which we spend time together and (2) the **broadening and deepening** of what we share together.



## — 04 Community Friends —

We are intentionally sharing regular time spent together beyond the area we have in common. When we enter into Community Friends we have crossed the lines of our original relationship boundaries so that now it feels normal to invite them to a random concert, check in with them about their weekend plans, or see if they are interested in starting a book club with us. This is where a “work friend” turns into a “friend outside of work,” too—so much so that if one of you changed jobs—you still have other structures in place to support your friendship. We are likely meeting important people in their lives and revealing life stories beyond the original bonding subject.

# 05

## Commitment Friends

We intimately and consistently share our lives with each other; our commitment extends beyond the things that hold us in common. This far right circle is reserved for those best friends who we are committed to regularly sharing our feelings with and staying involved in each other's lives in meaningful ways. We may have bonded as Common friends because of our kids or shared work, but these are now the friends that if those original common categories were to change it would no longer risk our relationship—they could switch jobs, get married, change interests, move away or the kids could all grow-up, but we will still be in each others lives. These are the women we will sacrifice for and love through any crisis.



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03

## Confirmed Friends

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Now, go back to the middle...

We share a history with these friends that has bonded us but our connection is not regular anymore. These are the friends that we used to live close to and love deeply, but we only talk to occasionally now. This middle is reserved for the friends that go much deeper than the left side—we in fact would have at one point placed them on the right side of our continuum—but we no longer have the regularity with them that we reserve for our right side. These are the women that we know we can pick up where we left off, but our commonality is now more in the past than it is in the present. They are not engaged in our day-to-day lives and in the creation of regular new memories together.



# FRIENDSHIP

We all tend to find some circles come to us more naturally, but we all need people in every circle. Some of us may love socializing and meeting tons of Contact Friends but have a harder time building enough consistency with a few to move into the real intimacy of Commitment Friends; whereas others of us may have a few close friends but hate going out and meeting people.

What's important to realize is that to make friends on the far Right-Side (Community and Commitment) they must start as friends on the Left-Side (Contact). All friendships start on the Left-Side no matter how much we're attracted to each other. It's less about simply discovering the right friend, and more about developing the right friendship.

Write the names of people you consider your friends along the Continuum.... where are you hungry for more relationships? What types of friends do you most need right now?

# Reflection Questions

1. Start by writing the names of all your current friends along the Continuum. Take the first name that comes into your head and ask yourself “Where does this person fit on this Continuum right now based on the relationship we currently share?”
2. Then, open your journal and write down some observations. Don’t judge them or talk yourself out of them—simply write down any acknowledgments that will give words to this visual picture.
  - What surprised you as you wrote down names of friends?
  - Which Circle(s) do you want to celebrate for how meaningful/full/strong it is right now?
  - Which Circle(s) do you wish was fuller/stronger/more meaningful?
  - Which Circle is the hardest for you to develop? Why do you think that is?
  - What other observation or insights do you have as you look at your Continuum?

## Shasta's Circles of Connectedness



# Reflection Questions

3. For each Circle, finish the sentence “In this Circle I most hunger for...” Whether it involves numbers, names, qualities or anything else—simply capture what you most hope for in that area. What do you think you need? What do you want for that category?

- Contact:
- Common:
- Confirmed:
- Community:
- Commitment:

## Shasta's Circles of Connectedness



# Reflection Questions

4. Now put a star next to the Circle that expresses your greatest loneliness right now. Which one do you most need to focus on right now?

Then, look to the left of your starred Circle to see which Circles to the left might be your best pool for friends that you can develop into the Circle with your star.

For example, if your desired Circle is Commitment Friends, do you have enough women in the Community Circle that if given a little more regularity and vulnerability could eventually turn into Commitment Friends? If not, do you need to go into your Confirmed Circle to see if there is anyone you can talk to weekly to eventually feel like a Commitment Friend? Or, is there a Common Friend you can start asking to do more with you outside of your area in common to eventually turn into a Community Friend? Or do you need to go meet people at start with Contact Friends to eventually have the Commitment Friends you crave?



# Reflection Questions

5. Write down the names of a couple women on your Continuum that you'd be willing to try to foster more time with. And try to jot down a few ideas of what you'd like to invite them to do with you, and by when you'll reach out to them.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Possible Activities</u>	<u>My Deadline for Initiating</u>
a.			
b.			
c.			

6. Finally, place your hand on your Continuum and end with this affirmation: "I am grateful to know my hunger."

## Additional Resources:

- Shasta's book *Friendships Don't Just Happen!* Devotes two entire chapters to examples, definitions, and helpful principles for evaluation.
- Shasta's blog post ["What Types of Friends do You Need?"](#) links to 5 short YouTube videos where she explains each of the 5 circles.