

Ep 299: Connection, Friendship, and Soul Circles



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Jen Riday

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Ep 299: Connection, Friendship, and Soul Circles

You are listening to the *Vibrant Happy Women* podcast. I'm Dr. Jen Riday and on this episode, we're talking about why we all can benefit from having a safe and likeminded circle of friends. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to *the Vibrant Happy Women* podcast.

Hey there my friends. Have you ever found yourself thinking that you need more likeminded friends, friends who love self-help, who like to grow, who like to talk about substantial things and not just engage in small talk? If that's you you're not alone. That's one of my favorite things about the Vibrant Happy Women Club and the Vibrant Happy Women retreat. Because I get to interact with women who also love talking about important things, about their growth, and personal development, and things they've learned.

And women who know how to listen and hold space, that is a sacred and beautiful thing to have in your life. Whether you already have that or not, we're going to be talking about how to create that and why that is helpful. And to help me with this topic I have enlisted the help of one of the Vibrant Happy Women Club soul circles. This is a group of women that meets every Wednesday night, this group in particular. They are from all over the world. And they're going to share why they keep showing up again and again for a soul circle.

Now, whether you have a soul circle, or a book club, or a dinner group, or a lunch group, or you would like to have one of those things, this episode applies. Because the point of a group of friends is like this soul circle, to have a space where you can be yourself, where you can feel heard, and

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seen, and safe, and supported. That kind of connection is essential for happiness. I believe that kind of connection is a basic human need.

A lot of times when we aren't meeting that need for connection, we'll try to meet that need in other words like streaming too long on Netflix, or eating too much chocolate, or just wandering around the house feeling bored not recognizing that the true need, the underlying subconscious need is to connect, to feel safe, and seen, and heard, and understood. And to have that deep love and acceptance. So if you have that in your in life, congratulations. If you don't have that in your life, that's okay, you can create it, I promise.

And for all of us wherever we fall on this spectrum we can get better at it. How can we create deeper connections? So I've invited a group of women from Vibrant Happy Women soul circle 6. This is from the Vibrant Happy Women Club. And these women are going to share why their soul circle and these friendships in their soul circle is so essential. I hope you enjoy it and let's dive in.

Jen: Alright, hey everyone, this is a very special podcast episode because I'm here with soul circle 6 from the Vibrant Happy Women Club. And some of these women have agreed to share why they keep coming back to soul circle week after week. So many of you out there listening have written in or emailed to say, "I'm so lonely. I don't feel safe, or seen, or heard, or supported at home. My spouse doesn't care how I feel. I can't find likeminded friends. I want people who want to grow and develop."

And one of the reasons people join a soul circle is for those very reasons, to have an environment that feels safe and supportive, where they can feel seen and heard, and to talk with, connect with likeminded women every week. So I'm here with soul circle 6. This group is led by Marcy on

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Wednesday nights in the US, US time, although some of the members aren't from the US. We have Mel from Australia. We have Elisa, and Lisa, and Lisa, this is the group with all the Lisa's. We have Marcy is the leader. We have Janet.

So all of these women have agreed to share tonight, some of their experiences being in a soul circle in the Vibrant Happy Women Club. So let's have everyone kind of give a quick introduction if you're cool with that. So let's start with you Janet and we'll go through the string of Lisa's and Elisa's, and Mel and then Marcy. Does that work? Janet, tell us where you're from and how long you've been in the soul circle.

Janet: Well, I am actually from Texas. And I actually don't know how long I've been coming to soul circles, over a year, maybe two years now. I don't know. It seems like forever. So I really enjoy it. I know I don't get to come all the time because of my crazy schedule. But I really enjoy coming.

Lisa: I live in Casper, Wyoming and I'm the newb of the group I think. I started in January so I'm in my 11th month. So I'm very excited to be here and I look forward to the future with Vibrant Happy Women and my fabulous soul circle.

Jen: Alright, thanks, Lisa.

Elisa: I'm Elisa and I'm from Portland, Oregon. I have been in soul circle 6 for a little over a year. And I truly enjoy it, a wonderful group of women.

Lisa: Hi, I'm Lisa and I've been in the soul circle almost two years, I think. I'm from Colorado Springs, Colorado. And I love the diversity of our group, there is people from all over the place and all different ages, and all different experiences and backgrounds so it's really fun.

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Mel: I'm Mel, I live in Brisbane, Australia. I've been in the soul circle for more than 12 months now. And I enjoy it so much, I have to say it's my favorite part of the week. And for me it's on Thursday mornings and I talk about it so much that my friends now message me, instead of saying happy Thursday, we say happy vibrant, happy women's day on a Thursday.

Jen: My goodness, that's hilarious. I love that. Thanks, Mel. And then Marcy, you recently took over as the leader of soul circle 6, what has been your experience? And I guess, tell us where you're from as well.

Marcy: Yeah. So I'm from Wichita, Kansas. I was previously the leader of soul circle 9 and then moved over to soul circle 6. This group of women is fantastic. There's quite a bit of longevity in this group but yet I have watched them accept newbies into the group, just create this very safe space. People in this group have been through some stuff. And it's been beautiful to watch the acceptance, and the growth, and the encouragement that happens in this group. So I am honored to be the leader of this group. I've been here a couple months and I'm loving every minute of it.

Jen: Awesome. Thanks, Marcy. Okay, so there are other members of this group but these are the women who have agreed to speak tonight. So I'm so grateful for that. So this'll be interesting. I've never had this many guests, I don't think on a podcast episode. But why soul circles? Why is that something you would dedicate your time to?

Lisa: This is, I just go by McDee, but Lisa McDee, because I have a lot of other friends that are Lisa's, so we all go by our last name. So I'm McDee. And when you offer the options for the Vibrant Happy Women Club this is the one that spoke to me most because I did want to be part of a soul circle. I wanted to have someone to speak with because I don't have a group of friends where I live. So this is my friend time too. And I think over these 11 years I can call these women my friends as well as my soul sisters.

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And so I like it because it's a safe space. It's a nice opportunity to just let it all out, let it all hang out and that's kind of why I decided to join this particular soul circle. I can't even think of a single time that there's been any negativity towards people's comments and things, so it's a very positive environment too.

Lisa: Hi, it's Lisa B, I have been listening to your podcast, Jen, for several years. And I'm sort of a person that likes to take a class. So I subscribed to some of your classes, and taken classes, and very structured. And so when you started the soul circle, I think a couple of years ago, I wasn't sure that it was really something that I wanted to commit to or that I felt like I needed. But I did engage and I joined. And it's been really amazing how – I didn't expect to have the friendships that I have.

And I look forward to seeing everybody every week because I know we catch up with each other, a little bit of what we're doing. And you're able to share in a real sense that you might not superficially, someone might say, "How are you today?" "Oh, sure, I'm fine." But you can let it all out and really say, "Gosh, you guys, this happened to me." And it's great bouncing things off, ideas from so many women. The support has been really wonderful.

Elisa: For me it's the connection, the human connection that I so desperately needed in my life that I think I found here in this wonderful group of women. It's something I definitely look forward to every week for the connection. We've had great laughs. We've had, you know, there's laughter and at the same time there's some seriousness, and there's some emotions and things like that that do get brought up. But we are so supportive of each other and that loving non-judgmental support of each other I feel is so strong and so valuable.

Jen: That's awesome. Thanks.

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Mel: So I'm also a long time listener of the Vibrant Happy Women podcast. And I guess for me, I don't know, it's everything the ladies have already said. I didn't really believe, so I've been on a two and a half, almost three year journey now. And when I joined, I was not going so well in my new journey, leaving my corporate job. And I truly believe I wouldn't be in a positive spot that I am without having this soul circle every week. As I've already said, it's something that I look forward to. I genuinely look forward to it. And my friends know so much.

And even my husband's like, "Quick, it's Vibrant Happy Women time, don't be late." I really appreciate the honest conversations. And you can share. If you're having a great week the ladies are happy for you and you can share when things are going good. But likewise, it's okay to be human and if you're not having those good weeks it's also okay to share that. And you know that you'll always be listened to. And some of the best advice has come from those times when things haven't been going so good.

And constantly, if I'm making decisions sometimes now, I'm thinking more about myself and how it makes me feel, and my purpose. My husband will go, "That's interesting. I'm so glad you've made that decision. Why did you do that?" And I'd be like, "Because it's the things that I've learned from the Vibrant Happy Women soul circle." So it's really been a positive impact on my life over the last 12 months, definitely. And I couldn't, I tell all my friends about it, it's great, I love it.

Jen: So I'm curious. Looking back over the past year or two for each of you, what have you learned as part of the soul circle, tools, skills, things that really help you show up differently in life?

Lisa: We always come with an agenda. It's usually going over what the week's lessons were. And so it helps, the soul circle helps keep me on track, so it gives me that added push to work through all the programs that you've set up for us, Jen. But the cool thing about the soul circle is we can

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veer off track of that if needed. So if somebody's having a difficult time then we can visit with them about that. And we have bypassed what the lessons were to help our sisters out here. So I think that's the cool thing is we get to learn and work on the lessons and discuss those.

This is a great sounding board here for us to work through those lessons and things like we were doing earlier today with our soul circle, is go through some of the lessons and the agenda so that we can get through that. And discuss, get into a little bit deeper detail and individualize what the lessons mean to us.

Jen: And the lessons this week were what, Lisa?

Lisa: So we've been working on, November, which is finding and living your purpose. And so for some of us that's difficult, for others of us it's not so difficult. So it's an opportunity for everyone to share where they are at in this month's lessons about finding our purpose.

Jen: Cool, thanks, Lisa.

Marcy: I think for me one of the things, somebody spoke to the diversity of this group and how we're all over the place and we're all at different stages in life and located in different places. But the commonality of our experiences I think is what has been so enlightening to me. The fact that no matter what story one of us is telling, everybody else can kind of identify with that story, and that journey, and the feelings that go with it.

And so that's been really eye-opening for me, especially because it is not just people who are in Kansas with me or people who are in the Midwest. It's people who are in Australia, and there's a lot of Vibrant Happy Women who are in Canada and Switzerland, and places all over. And so just that commonality of experience as women is just a huge factor in people's

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ability to connect that I think is just so lacking in society in general as we all go through our days running normal life.

Jen: To know you're not alone with things?

Marcy: Yeah, for sure.

Jen: Other people get it, yeah. Thanks, Marcy. And for you, Marcy, favorite tool you've learned or developed through a soul circle?

Marcy: I think echoing things back to people, I think a lot of times is helpful because they do feel seen and heard. And we also use the thought table a lot. We do try to walk through because a lot of times our perspective and our thoughts we're having about a situation are actually what's making us miserable. And so when we're able to entertain some different thoughts and work our way through that thought table and up-level those thoughts, which then is going to change our feelings, and change our actions, and change our outcomes.

That's super powerful, so to watch these women walk through that and to be able to help facilitate that is just amazing to experience.

Jen: Cool. Thanks, Marcy. What have you learned through your soul circle, how has it helped your life?

Janet: Well, for me, a lot of this has been in my head for a while, some things are. But this has helped me communicate it better because a lot of times I internalize most things, any of the feelings, good, bad or otherwise I tend to internalize them. And the feelings will – I have these feelings but I don't know what to call it. I don't want to call it just mad or sad, there's more to it than that.

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So it's given me a bigger vocabulary of how to describe how I'm feeling and a way to get that out to those that I need to tell, whether it's my husband, or my kiddo, or my students, or other colleagues that I'm working with. So I mean the Vibrant Happy Women Club has definitely given me some tools that way to better communicate and not internalize everything quite like I used to. Still working on that but getting better.

Elisa: I really appreciate that every month there is a slightly different focus. I feel like that's more well-rounded into our daily life. And some months speak more loudly to me than others. But the skills and the thought tables, you can apply to any month or any situation. And it's not just like we're just talking about time management or whatever it is. We're talking about the whole person and it's all of us, it's not just one little piece. And I really appreciate that.

Mel: I'm on the same page as Elisa. I'm really appreciating a different topic every month because it really does get you to work through lots of different areas. Even the budgeting one was surprising to me. I did enjoy the budgeting one. I actually thought I had budgeting nailed but picked up a number of tips during that month. But I think if I had to pick one which was hard, the feel it to heal it has really helped me because if I look back to who I used to be, people would describe me as glass half full. They used to call me the energizer bunny.

So any feelings that I had other than positive I used to suppress, push away, nothing to see here, I am 100% happy 100% of the time. And that led to stress in my shoulders, and headaches, and all sorts of things. And the feel it to heal it has given me the opportunity I guess to acknowledge my feelings. It's okay not to feel 100% happy 100% of the time. And you can acknowledge those and yeah, that's been a relief to know that it's okay to have feelings other than positive ones.

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Jen: And has your shoulder tension decreased and the headaches because you're...

Mel: Yes. Yes. I'm happy to say that my chiropractor has commented, yes.

Jen: Wow.

Mel: That [inaudible] my shoulders and I haven't had a headache for months.

Lisa: So I have become a better person because of Vibrant Happy Women, because of your podcast and definitely because of Soul Circle. Going through the program, talking with these fabulous ladies, working through problems with someone. I have a great husband but it's not the same as talking to your girl friends, and talking to people, and having Marcy be our leader and having Jen be the big leader. It's made a huge impact in my life in the way I relate to my husband, relate to my family, to my co-workers, and people in general.

I've found that I have become more happy, which I think is the goal, it's the Vibrant Happy, I'm pretty vibrant, so it was the happy part that needed work. So yes, so definitely more vibrant. Thank you.

Mel: Mel here again. I guess for me the soul circle has just given me the confidence to be who I am. So as I was saying earlier, just to walk into a barbecue and say, "Hey, I'm Mel, I'm a stay-at-home mom." And I'm so grateful for that opportunity, and just be confident to say that versus trying to think, oh my goodness, I don't have a role. I'm not a scientist anymore. But that confidence is a really big thing for me.

Lisa: I think of this group almost like a little – it's like this little nurturing nest we all come into once a week. And it makes it easier for me to go back out

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into the world that can be a little crazy. We've all been living through a lot of craziness the last 20, 22 months. And it just kind of gives you that internal power to be able to go and face what it is that's in the week coming. And you're kind of letting go of some of the stuff that happened in the past week and kind of shoring yourself up for things that might come at you in the coming week.

And it just really is kind of a centering, nurturing space to come to that hour every week. And you wouldn't think that one hour a week would have that kind of power but it really does.

Jen: So what about people who feel shy, you mentioned Lisa, when you came at first you were probably really scared and shy. What should an introvert do about soul circles, I mean is it for them?

Marcy: We don't pressure anybody to contribute at any point in time. For instance one of the things we've kind of over the last several weeks started doing is kind of, how was your week, thumbs up, sideways, thumbs down. We don't force anybody to provide details they're not wanting to provide. And so sometimes when people have had a tough week. I've watched them kind of come in and just observe, and just kind of absorb the energy that's happening with the group. And that's the beautiful thing.

These women don't have any agenda about your life or the outcomes of your life other than being here to support you and hopefully helping you to find your way to happy. So that's the beautiful piece of that is that there is no outside agenda. And you don't have to come in here ready to bare your soul and share your whole story. I can probably guarantee you over time you're probably going to get there just because these women are so amazing and so wonderful, that are attracted to Vibrant Happy Women and to soul circles in general.

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So you're going to find your place. And so even if you're shy you can show up, you don't have to contribute, you can be an observer just on the fringes. But I would bet, if you want to bet money, eventually you're going to feel comfortable enough to share who you are and to take that active support.

Jen: So if there's someone out there thinking, hey, I'm lonely, I don't feel seen, or heard, or understood, what advice would you have for them?

Elisa: So, Elisa. I would say join, one word, join the soul circle groups because it has made such an impact in my life. You need to join. It's as simple as that.

Marcy: I would just encourage women to invest in themselves. There's so many things that we spend money on and so many ways that we waste money. But when you hear the stories of these women and what their experience has been in Vibrant Happy Women, it is a small investment for a return to sanity, for feeling supported, for feeling seen, for feeling heard. And so if you can kind of turn that on its head and say, "I'm investing in my own happiness", how powerful of a motivator is that?

And everybody deserves it, every single woman on the planet deserves to be happy and to invest in their own happiness. So go ahead and join because you're not going to regret it, I promise.

Mel: And I think, Jen, sorry, I was just thinking as well, it's not just an investment for yourself, I found it an investment for our family as well. So my eldest son who is not big on feelings actually was talking about his feelings while we were driving in the car the other day. And I just gave myself a little high five to myself, going, wow, this is fantastic. Because 12 months ago I don't know that we would have been having the same conversation.

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So I think it's an investment for your family because the children will see you talking about your feelings and then they naturally feel more comfortable doing that. So that was a big high five to me when he did it.

Jen: That's a huge win, yeah, for sure. Awesome. Well, I appreciate you all so much sharing your experience. I love soul circle 6. I love all the other soul circles. I'll see some of you at the Vibrant Happy Women retreat.

I hope that conversation was fun for you and that it gave you some food for thought about your friendships. Are your friendships meeting your needs? Do you feel seen, and heard, and understood? Do you get to laugh with your friends? Do you feel like your friendships are authentic, and nurturing, and emotionally safe? If you're answering yes to these questions then great, congratulations. Keep nurturing those amazing friendships that you have.

If you'd like to improve in this area and have more of those likeminded heart-centered friendships then set that intention. I truly believe the moment we get clear on what we want and what we no longer want, that God/the universe starts to move and shift things in our favor and give us opportunities to form and strengthen those types of friendships.

For those of you who are in the club, congratulations, you get to have a taste of this every week. I encourage you to keep showing up and nurturing those friendships there. Friendship is as much about what you give and is about what you get. We need to be able to listen, and learn, and create a safe emotional space for everyone else as much as we hope to get that. We all co-create these circles of friendship.

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If you are not yet in the Vibrant Happy Women Club or looking for something like a soul circle, you are more than welcome to join us. In 2022 we have some amazing things planned in the club where we will be working throughout the year on deciding what we want, not just for friendships but for every area of our lives. Our self-love, our time, our clutter, our health, our finances, our parenting, our marriages, all the things.

What do you actually want? If you get clear on that in the same way, God/the universe starts to shift things in our favor and give us opportunities to grow and become more vibrant, and happy, and aligned, and alive which I know we all crave so much. If you like the idea of growing in this way with other women who have your back, definitely join us in the club, it's an amazing place.

Well, my friends, I love you, I will see you again next time. Until then make it a vibrant and happy week and make the choice to fill your life with those vibrant and happy nurturing friendships. I'll see you again next time. Take care.

If you enjoy this podcast, you have to check out the Vibrant Happy Women Club. It's my monthly group coaching program where we take all this material to the next level and to get you the results that will blow your mind. Join me in the Vibrant Happy Women Club at jenriday.com/join.