We’re starting #SpringItOn with a Friend Cleanse! What is a Friend Cleanse? A Friend Cleanse is the process of figuring out what friendships serve you, setting boundaries, and deepening your best relationships.

Why does it matter? Because the people who surround you have tremendous influence over your mental health and habits. Mirror neurons and our inherent need to fit in make us more likely to do what others around us are doing, even when we really don’t want to. That’s why it’s important to surround yourself with good people.

This week, you’ll spend five days learning how to create positive friendships that work for you.
DAY 1
LOOK INWARD

Before you look outside yourself, you have to look in the mirror. Making good friends means being a good friend and that starts with the way you treat yourself.

Friends give time to each other. Do you give yourself time? How can you gift yourself 10 minutes of self-care today?

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Friends cheer for each other. Are you cheering for yourself? What is one anchor thought you can repeat throughout the day that will help you feel energized and good about yourself?

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Now let’s start looking out. A friend cleanse requires that you figure out what kinds of relationships you want to have at this stage of your life. To do that, you have to get to know yourself.

What are your most important values? (integrity, honesty, compassion, humor, creativity, commitment, adventurous spirit, positivity, generosity, fitness, etc.)

At this stage of your life, what are your goals?

How do your goals and values differ from what they were in the past?

What kind of person do you want to be?

What changes do you need to make in your own life to live your values?

Note: As you assess who you want to become, it’s important to be mindful and intentional about who you spend your time with.
DAY 2
FILTER YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

Now, it’s time to figure out which of your friends act in ways that YOU want to act (remember, the behavior of your friends is contagious) and which ones do not.

Make a list of up to 3 of your friends. (Repeat this exercise with more names later, if you wish.)

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Do these friendships help you or keep you from making important, positive change in your life?

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What are the behaviors your friends do that you no longer want to do?

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WEEK 1: THE FRIEND CLEANSE

What are their behaviors that inspire you?

Which of those friendships line up with your current values and goals?

Which friendships do not?

Which of your friends make you feel energized after you spend time with them?

Which ones make you feel depleted?
WEEK 1: THE FRIEND CLEANSE

What friends from the past do you feel you’re holding on to and why?

Note: Nobody is going to be positive and upbeat every day. There are times your friends will be there to support you when you’re down and you will do the same for them. In these exercises, you are looking for patterns of behavior over a period of time and how those behaviors impact what and how you feel about yourself.

Knowing that, zone in on the friends in your life. Do you have a toxic friendship?

**WARNING SIGNS OF A TOXIC FRIEND:**

1. Your other friends and family don’t like or trust this person.
2. They always talk about themselves and never ask about you.
3. They belittle you and your accomplishments. They always take but never give.
4. They’re jealous of your success instead of celebratory.
5. You feel depleted after time together.
6. You don’t look forward to your time together.
7. They share things with others that you shared in confidence.

Are there people in your life with these warning signs?

What do they do when you’re together that is toxic?
You have friends who are supportive and those who are depleting, but you may also have people in your life who, while not toxic, don’t help you to feel good about yourself.

Maybe it’s the friend you don’t have much in common with anymore yet you still feel guilty when you don’t make plans. Or, maybe it’s a former colleague or neighbor who you don’t see anymore but beat yourself up about not reaching out to.

List who these people are for you:

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DAY 3
MAKE DECISIONS

In the last exercise, you identified your supportive (and toxic) friends. Now it’s time to get real about your friendships.

After thinking about it, which friendships should you stop giving your energy to?

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WEEK 1: THE FRIEND CLEANSE

Be honest – what do you get out of each friendship? What do you give?

Can the friendships be saved with an honest conversation? Do you want to save them?

What friendships should you give more energy to?

What people in your life do you want to become closer to?
One important mindset shift is to change the way you think about friendships. As you get older and your values change, some friends will no longer align with your life and that’s okay. Normal even.

Don’t make yourself wrong about it. You’ve grown. If a friendship doesn’t align with your values and leaves you feeling down, let it go.

I love this metaphor from my friend Jay Shetty: FRIENDSHIPS ARE LIKE A TREE.

**Some friends are leaves.** A tree has hundreds of leaves. Every season those leaves turn green. The energy they absorb from the sun and rain give the tree life. Then seasons change. Leaves wither and die so that a new set of leaves can replace them when it’s time. It’s a natural process. Some friends are only meant to be with you for a season.

**Some friends are branches.** Branches are a little stronger than leaves but branches can break when they become too weighted down. Some friendships cannot handle the weight of life’s hard times. But they were there for you through the good times. There for a reason.

**Some friends are roots.** Roots run deep and strong. They hold a tree firm in place, and help the tree ride out even the strongest storms. You don’t always see the roots, but their presence is felt. These are your friends for a lifetime.
DAY 4
CREATE A PLAN

Once you’ve made decisions about your friendships, it’s time to plan what happens next. You get to decide how to spend your time and which relationships make the most sense for you.

Which friends do you need to set boundaries with?

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What are those boundaries?

*Example: If you always end up drinking too much when you’re out with your college friend, your new boundary is to meet up for coffee or a hike.*

*Example: If someone close to you seems to always criticize what you’re doing, turn the focus of the conversation on them and limit the amount of time you spend with this person.*

My boundaries:

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After taking some time to reflect, are there friendships you need to let go of?

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For these friends, come up with a plan to start letting go. Those plans might be different for each friend, depending on the relationship. That’s okay.

Examples: a heart-to-heart conversation to share what’s bugging you so they have a chance to weigh in, reaching out less often, responding less often, making plans that reflect what you value most and inviting them along, mutual letting go, muting on social media.

Now write your plan:

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For many people, setting boundaries is a source of guilt. If you feel guilty about letting go of friendships, think of your relationships as a garden.

Growing up in the midwest, we always planted a vegetable garden every spring. When you plant a vegetable garden, you sow the seeds pretty closely and wait to see which ones start to grow. When a bunch grow together in the same area, you have to thin out the weakest ones so the stronger plant will have the nutrients it needs to grow bigger and stronger.

I like to think that’s how friendships work, too. There are times in your life when you will be growing, but unless you pluck those weakest friendships from your life, you won’t be able to because those relationships will absorb the energy you need to grow.
DAY 5
REINVEST YOUR ENERGY

Today it’s time to focus on filling your life with new friends who share similar interests or goals so you start to feel more energized and empowered.

Who are your friends that help you feel good about yourself?

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How can you see or talk to them more?

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Now reach out to one of these friends and make a plan to see them. Once you’ve done it, write the date and your plan here:

DATE:

PLAN:

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Another important part of a friend cleanse is meeting new people who enrich your life. Places to meet empowering people include community events, any kind of class, a volunteer organization, an outdoor group, local theater, and book clubs. Meetup.com is a great resource for meeting people who share your interests.

What are some of your favorite activities that you feel good about doing?

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How can you meet new people doing these activities?

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TUNE IN FOR YOUR
WEEK 2 WORKBOOK
TO CONTINUE YOUR
#SPRINGITON!