



LEVEL 5 FRIENDSHIP PLAYBOOK

A Simple Path and Tips to Grow LIFE-GIVING FRIENDSHIP



Inspired by the
Friendship and
Brotherhood of Jesus

Men can't win alone. As a leader, you need a couple close friends who truly know you, make you laugh, and have your back. You want **life-giving friendship**—a brotherhood grounded in loyalty, trust, and mutual support. It's being real and truly known, intentionally becoming better men as you sharpen each other. Jesus modeled life-changing friendship, and He designed us for the same.

Level 5 Friendship isn't a group—it's intentional brotherhood. It's huddling to drop your guard, talk about your real stuff, and get wisdom. It's sharing burdens as you encourage and pray for each other.

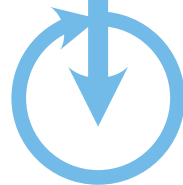
Why I care - Jeff Kemp

As an NFL quarterback, the huddle was my safe place with teammates who wanted my best. We communicated vital plans and feedback to adjust and win together. Off the field, regular huddling with my closest friends has made an even greater impact. It grounds us, strengthens us, and keeps us on track. My mission now is to help men grow in faith, friendship, and impact. **Level 5 Friendship is the Way of Jesus.** It's a camaraderie of encouragement, honesty, and courage. This playbook is a guide to building your closest, lasting friendships that help you thrive and positively impact those around you.



Jeff Kemp

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WHY MEN NEED TO HUDDLE



WHAT'S YOUR HUDDLE?



HOW TO START HUDDLING



A PLAN FOR YOUR FIRST HUDDLE



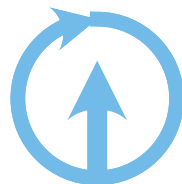
YOUR NEXT STEPS



FRIENDSHIP AND THE WAY OF JESUS



**"A MAN CAN'T GET
ANYTHING DONE
WITHOUT A TEAM"**



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A photograph of three men in an outdoor setting. The man in the center, wearing a red and black plaid shirt and glasses, is holding a white coffee cup and looking towards the man on the left. The man on the left is wearing a light blue shirt and is smiling. The man on the right is partially visible, wearing a dark suit and a green tie, and is holding a black object. The background shows green foliage and a blurred building.

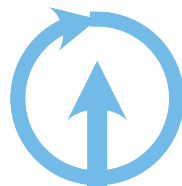
WHY MEN NEED TO HUDDLE

A white arrow pointing upwards, starting from the bottom left of the text block and ending just below the word 'LEVEL'.

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**76% OF MEN DON'T HAVE
A CLOSE AND TRUSTED
FRIEND THEY CAN SHARE
ANYTHING WITH ON ANY
TOPIC**

– 2021 PERSPECTIVES SURVEY
BY THE SURVEY CENTER ON
AMERICAN LIFE



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MOST MEN ARE ISOLATED

If we go back to the very beginning, we see man living without flaw. In the Garden of Eden God knew that Adam, created perfect, was missing something. "It's not good for man to be alone, God said" (Genesis 2:18). If man in perfection needed a friend, how much more do you and I?

A recent survey on friendship indicated that 76% of men don't have a close and trusted friend they can share anything with, on any topic. That number sounds high because it is. Even though we are wired for community, men gravitate towards isolation—something the book of Proverbs warns against. ***"Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment"*** (18:1).

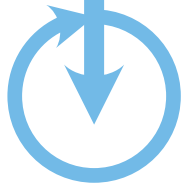
The opposite is also true. When men build a brotherhood, a small huddle of trusted friends who share their every aspirations and confess failures, our insecurities, doubts and limitations fall away. There is more strength in the unity of three (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

Jesus gathered a handful of men and introduced them to the deepest levels of friendship. **He exemplified what it looked like to be to be real, loyal, honest, and engaged in a committed, purposeful and consistent friendship.** Under Christ's leadership, those men spread His movement that changed the world.



Video Content:

[Making Men and Friends the Jesus Way](#)



Samson was a volcano of a man and judge over Israel for two decades. God had set him apart as a deliverer and given him unrivaled strength to rip apart lions and enemies (Judges 13-15). Despite his assigned authority and, incredible power, Samson's life was defined by epic and serial failures.

Those failures could be linked to Samson's lack of meaningful friendships. The groomsmen at his own wedding were strangers, and he chose to live alone in an isolated cave (Judges 14:10-11; 15:8). Samson operated solo. He kept it all inside. He kept it all for himself. His "no friends" and "no feedback" approach backfired.

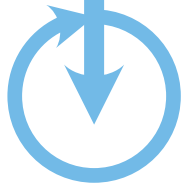
Mike Woodruff is a friend, pastor & author on friendship. He points out:

- we are wired for friends
- life is better with friends
- good friends raise us up
- when it comes to friends, **we must be intentional**

Not all of our friendships are the same, and that's OK. However, knowing the role of the best kind of friendships and knowing your gaps in friendship can make all the difference.

Here are five levels of friendship, and to reach the highest level, we've got to be intentional. On the next page we've laid them out so you can identify deep friendship and aim for the best.

*LEVEL 5 FRIENDSHIP is inspired by Jesus. But also by the phrase "Level Five Leader" in Jim Collins' GOOD TO GREAT, and by Mike Woodruff describing four levels of friends in FRIENDS FOR THE BROKEN.



LEVEL 5 FRIENDSHIP

Level 5—Deep Friendship

brother, teammate and partner in life - This friendship adds purposeful commitment to consistently connect, encourage and self-disclose. You know your stories, secrets and struggles. You voluntarily share all the key stuff in your life -aspirations, struggles, weaknesses. You pray for each other, lift each other, confess sins, stay accountable, and pull each other closer to Jesus and Abba Father.

- Intentional, Committed, Consistent
- Trusting, Loyal, Confidential
- Encouraging, Curious, Self-Disclosing
- No secrets, judging or fixing
- Confessing, Praying, Transforming

Level 4—Strong Friendship

good buddy or 2AM friend - You trust each other. You can count on each other in a crisis. You can open up to talk honestly about meaningful parts of your life. But, that doesn't happen often or you may not connect for months at a time.

Level 3—Good Friendship

companion - You can hang out and joke around. You talk about the usual stuff, but not private and meaningful parts of your life. There's some trust...and some caution.

Level 2—Basic Friendship

peer - You act friendly, barely connect, and only speak about factual, external stuff on a surface level.

Level 1—Casual Friendship

acquaintance - This is a guy you've met and may or may not remember his name.

A photograph of three men sitting in a grassy field at dusk. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The man on the left is wearing a dark jacket and is looking towards the other two. The man in the middle is wearing a red jacket and is looking towards the right. The man on the right is wearing a green jacket and a hat, and is looking towards the right. The overall mood is calm and contemplative.

LEVEL 5 FRIENDSHIP



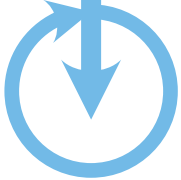
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LEVEL 5 FRIENDSHIP

An NFL huddle is a trusted team coming together to communicate a plan of attack that will overcome any opposition or blitz. It's not much different for you and a couple friends who huddle about your lives.

Consistently meeting with intentional deep friends is your Men Huddle. It's a few friends connecting weekly to encourage. It's where you're known, accepted & supported as you process your lives. It becomes brotherhood as you choose to live in the light to become more like Jesus—beloved sons of our Heavenly Father.

A Men Huddle, your Level 5 Friendship looks like this:

- 
- **Consistent Meeting**— A weekly frequency and dependability is powerful and protective.
 - **Defined Purpose**—We're growing closer to Christ and one another. Our huddle helps us overcome wounds, mistakes & challenges to become the men He invites us to be.
 - **Confidential & Safe**—This friendship is a judgment-free place to honestly share and pray about the most important things going on in our lives.
 - **Transformative**— Huddling friendship lets us open up about the past and right now. It's open sharing, self awareness, and humble confession so we heal and grow. We become partners in each guy's success. a church program
 - **Fun**—A tight-knit team of true friends laugh, comfort and support each other. Level 5 Friends gain joy and confidence as buddies and as friends of Jesus.

A Huddle is NOT

- a new men's group to form or join
- a tough questions accountability session
- one guy as leader
- a book/bible study or church program



Video Content:

[How to rid yourself of guilt and shame](#)

HURDLES & CONCERNS

Will I get exposed as a loser or failure?

Not if you define the purpose and loyalty of your friendship and huddle. Other guys feel the same. This is God's team approach for turning your story around.

Will I get burned? I can't have a guy spread my "stuff".

It's very unlikely if you discuss, define and agree, "We're confidential. We've got our backs." It's only Level 5 Friendship huddling when each agrees.

Another meeting! Family, work, and travel take most of my time.

Can you schedule 60 minutes a week for a friendship call that improves the rest of your week, your family, and work life?

My last group never got honest and drifted apart.

Don't give up on deep friendship. Ask God who needs to huddle with you. Be clear upfront what we're aiming to do.

I can't lead this. I'm not qualified.

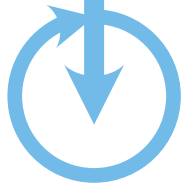
You don't need to. It's friendship...not teaching, fixing, or impressing each other. Just clearly propose it and help schedule regular connection.

Will this compete with or expand our ministry to men?

Envision if every man asked new guys, "Do you have a couple deep friendships? Want to try huddling?" More men will get engaged.

How will this impact our Bible study and other groups?

Deep friendship grows mutual discipleship and hunger for God's word. Huddling can become an on-ramp and deepen your other men's groups.



A photograph of three men sitting in the back of a convertible car, laughing and smiling. The man in the center is holding a smartphone. The image has a warm, golden-hour light. A white rectangular border is overlaid on the left and bottom of the image.

HOW TO START HUDDLING



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Ben Franklin was credited with, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." Great friendship and consistent huddling won't simply happen. Be intentional.

ONE

Choose your teammates—Ask God to guide the who and how. Think of quality old friends and recent friends who'd value this and add value.

TWO

Define Level 5 Friendship and huddling —Talk to a couple friends about this. Share your hope and vision of what this friendship team can be. Remind them it's the way Jesus lived with the men He called His "friends". the lifestyle. Say something like, "Let's deepen our friendship by huddling weekly to encourage and have each other's back. We'll talk and pray about our most important stuff so can grow into better men. It'll be valuable and fun."

THREE

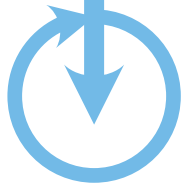
Choose a time—Consistent meeting is crucial to a huddle. Have each guy suggest days and times that work. Agree on your time and schedule. Commit to it. Each of you are leaders, responsible to be there, or reschedule it when necessary.

FOUR

Choose a place—Coffee shop, favorite deli, your basement, church, Zoom, phone or on a walk. Guys can live in different cities. Make it private enough so you don't have to yell, "I just slapped my boss and got fired" in a packed Waffle House at 2 a.m.

FIVE

Commit—Get some hustle. Dive in. Explain it to a buddy or two. Ask if he wants this too. Set a meeting and start huddling each week.



A photograph of three men standing outdoors in front of a multi-story building with a prominent green fire escape. The man on the left is Black with a grey beard, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt. The man in the center has red hair and freckles, wearing a light purple button-down shirt with his arms crossed. The man on the right is white with a beard, wearing a grey V-neck sweater over a light blue shirt. They are all smiling at the camera.

A PLAN FOR YOUR FIRST HUDDLE



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OKAY, you have a couple of guys excited and committed to huddling to grow into Level 5 Friends. Let's tackle three big questions guys have.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Eventually, your connection time will ease into simply showing up and sharing what's most important in your life and heart. Most guys aren't fans of sitting in a circle being asked about their "feelings". We're kinda like Ricky Bobby's media interview in Talladega Nights after his first win, "I'm not sure what to do with my hands."

HOW DO WE START?

Guys get comfortable with shoulder-to-shoulder time - a great meal, bonfire, roadtrip or outdoor adventure. Telling your life stories is a great start, perhaps for your first several meetings.

So, your first huddle...

You may want a little action, an experience. Doing fun stuff and intentionally sharing stories help men share real stuff.

An easy way to launch your huddle meetings is sharing about your dads and childhood. You'll all open up and get to know each other quickly. You can unpack your life stories (especially blitzes & key chapters) in the first few huddle gatherings.

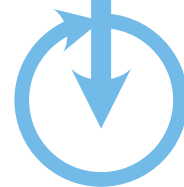
WHAT DO WE TALK ABOUT FIRST?

An easy way to launch your huddle meetings is sharing about your dads and childhood. You'll all open up and get to know each other quickly. You can unpack your life stories (especially blitzes & key chapters) in the first few huddle gatherings.



Video Content:

[Easy steps to get your huddle started](#)



YOUR HUDDLE PLAN

Your huddle plan each week is simple. It's God's agenda, not a curriculum, study, or interview. It's as simple as asking Father God to help you examine yourself with a quick x-ray of the main aspects of your life and then voluntarily sharing the crucial things He wants you to process. Here's a simple flow as each of you invite one another to self share.

1. What's the most important thing for you to talk about?

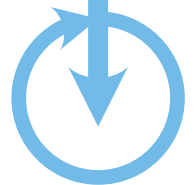
- gratitude - what's going well
- concern - what's not
- struggle - a pressing trial or challenge
- temptation and failures - Bring it into the light. Break their power. Confessing heals you (James 5:16).
- question - what you're asking Father God to show you

2. How can we pray for you?

3. Are you hearing Father God say something to you in His Word?

- We go to God's Word as His sons to hear from our Father.
- His word is our best food and true authority.
- We share our "aha moments," but don't teach, fix, or impress.

* Just before you gather or get on your huddle call, ask God to help you do a quick x-ray of your life today. The Self X-Ray can help you quickly assess seven aspects of your life. Ask God's Spirit to guide what's important to share.



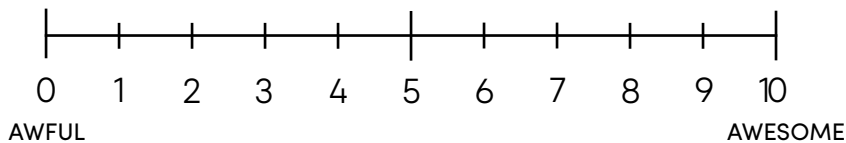
FRIENDSHIP SELF X-RAY

NAME _____

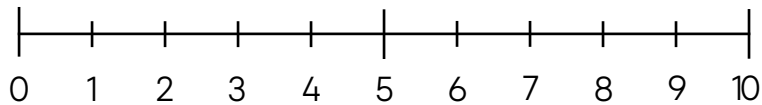
**HOW FAITHFUL, HEALTHY & STRONG
ARE YOU IN THESE AREAS.**

**DESCRIBE IT IN ONE WORD
OR METAPHOR.**

GOD



WIFE



FAMILY



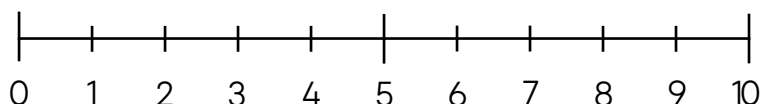
PERSONAL



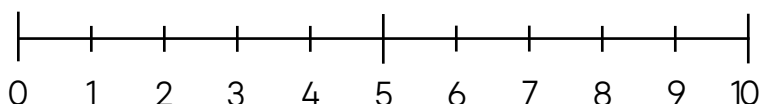
TEMPTATIONS AND RISKS



WORK CAREER



KINGDOM INFLUENCE



A photograph of three young men laughing and talking on a city street. The man on the left is wearing a grey hoodie and a blue cap, laughing with his mouth open. The man in the center is wearing a dark jacket with white stripes on the sleeves and a dark beanie, looking down. The man on the right is wearing a pink hoodie and a green cap, looking towards the others. The background shows a city street with buildings and trees.

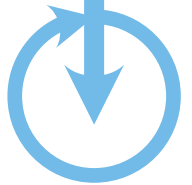
YOUR NEXT STEPS



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**1 DECIDE TO START
HUDDLING**

**2 INVITE GUYS TO
HUDDLE**



**3 SET THE TIME AND
A WAY FOR YOUR
FIRST HUDDLE**

Deep Friendship is THE WAY OF JESUS. You can make Level 5 Friendship and huddling fit your life, and the DNA of your church, or organization. We'll support you, so please connect and utilize additional content.

Visit MenHuddle.com for more resources or to connect with Jeff.

Please share this with friends, leaders and your pastor. If you want to connect pastors/leaders and me, copy me at Jeff@JeffKempTeam.com.

FRIENDSHIPS AND THE WAY OF JESUS

1 JOHN 1:7 NLT

But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

PROVERBS 27:17 NLT

As iron sharpens iron, a friend sharpens a friend.

HEBREWS 10:24-25 NIV

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

GALATIANS 6:2-4 NLT

Share each other's burdens; it's the way to obey the law of Christ.

JAMES 5:16 NIV

Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

PROVERBS 17:17 NIV

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

