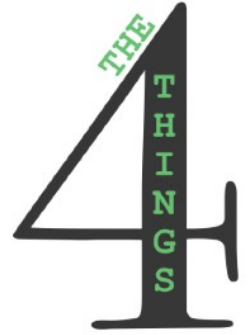


**That every friend wants  
their friend to know.**



### Getting Started

- **W**ho was your best friend growing up?
- What friend have you had the longest?
- What friend do you tend to laugh the most with?
- What friend do you know the real truth about you?

### Going Deeper

Take a look at [Ecclesiastes 4:1-6](#).

Solomon paints a picture of the crisis state our lives can get into if we don't keep friends close to us. What are the most common dangers to our close relationships according to these verses?

What are other issues common in today's culture that keep people distant?

In [Ecclesiastes 4](#), Solomon gives four ways to deepen our relationships.

Let's take a moment to look at each of them

#### **1) Designate Time**

Read [Ecclesiastes 4:7,8](#). These verses paint a picture of a man who has failed in his relationships.

- Have you seen this scenario played out in people around you?
- How can these same tendencies sneak into our lives?
- What are the biggest barriers to your finding the time you need to maintain your friendships?

## 2) Depend on each other

Read [Ecclesiastes 4:9,10](#)

Who are you most likely to call when you fall?

Are you more likely to call someone during your down times or are you more likely to try to pull yourself up?

Have you ever found yourself in trouble without someone to call on for help?

## 3) Develop Intimacy

[Ecclesiastes 4:11,12](#) is most commonly understood as marriage verses but also speaks to the intimacy of close relationships. What can people do in their relationships to cultivate closeness?

Read and discuss the following quote:

*“Owning our story can be hard but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it. Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on love and belonging and joy—the experiences that make us the most vulnerable.”*

—Brent Brown

## 4) Defend each other

Read [Ecclesiastes 4:12](#). What are some practical way that people can practice defending each other?

What are the most common ways that friends fail to defend each other?

In the book, **Be There**, John Trent gives 10 ways to be a “Be-There” friend.

Which of the following are you best at? Which of these would you like to be better at?

A “Be-There” friend...

- Will automatically volunteer to watch your kids when you have an important appointment
- Begins conversations by asking you questions about how you are doing
- Loans you his pickup and helps you move across town
- After borrowing your truck, return your vehicle with a full tank of gas and doesn't tell you he filled it up
- Defends you when you are not around to do it yourself
- Prays for you over the phone instead of saying, "I'll pray for you."
- Remembers your last conversation and the next time you talk asks you how things turned out
- Invites you over for dinner when your spouse is out of town
- Treats your children as if they were his or hers
- Doesn't say, "If there's anything you need, just call," but does something on your behalf when she sees the need

-John Trent, Be There

Take a few minutes to pray for your friendships  
as we learn to apply what we have learned.

