

JIM PUTMAN

UNBREAKABLE FRIENDSHIP

5 Steps To Developing Friendships That Last

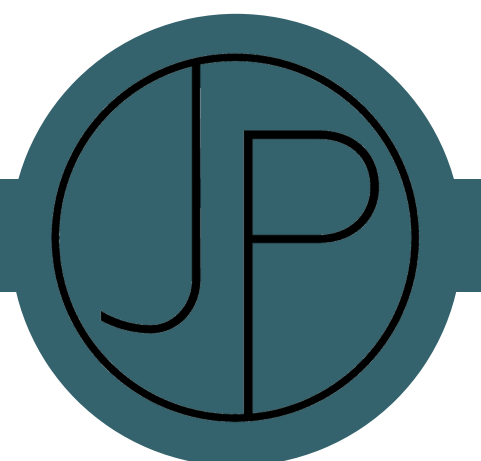
THE MOST IMPACTFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR LIFE
WILL BE THE FRIENDS THAT STAND WITH YOU
THROUGH THE STORM

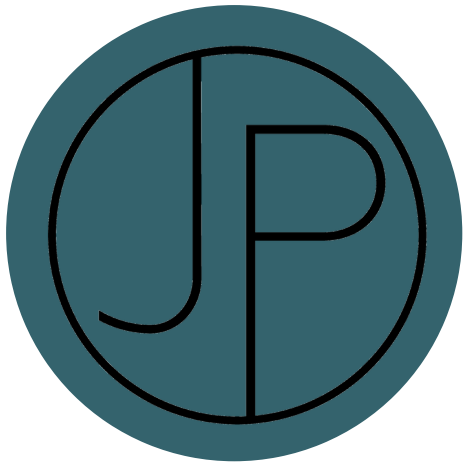


Don't walk away, don't give up
Be willing to fight for authentic friendship

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About the Author

Jim Putman is the co-founder and Senior Pastor of Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho. Prior to his role as senior pastor, he served as youth minister in two small churches. In college, Jim won three All American titles in wrestling and went on to become a successful wrestling coach. Jim's passion is discipleship centered on following the teachings and methodologies of Jesus. He is the author of 4 books: Church is a Team Sport, Real Life Discipleship, The Power of Together (book and workbook), and Hope for the Prodigal. He has co-authored The Real Life Discipleship Manual and Discipleshift.



God Created Us For Relationship

He created us to have friendships and be a part of a church body. Unfortunately, that is easier said than done in the extremely hectic society in which most of us live. If God is a relational God, and we were created to be in relationships, and if relationship is His highest priority, then it's time we put it at the top of our priority list, too.

If God created us for relationships, shouldn't we order our lives in such a way that we ? It isn't easy; relationships take work. We need to rebuild the framework of our lives so we can have the thing that God intended for us to have.

With that in mind, my team and I have put together 5 steps that will help you become a better friend, help you make better friendships, and that set you on the path that leads you closer to the full and abundant life God intends for you!



Step 1: Be the REAL you

Many people have "friendly contacts," but they don't have real relationships. There is a big difference! With friendly contacts, we may smile, shake hands, talk about the weather, or like each other's posts on Facebook. But in a real relationship, we are honest enough to share our personal struggles. We allow ourselves to be known and helped when we need it. A real friend is one we can be transparent with – we don't have to act like everything is fine when it really isn't. A real friend will allow you to see behind the carefully staged Instagram photo to what is actually going on in his/her life. A genuine, vulnerable relationship with a friend is like a rope that can hold you strong and safe and keep you centered on what is true and what is important.

But remember, the key word here is genuine. If we are not being who we really are, those friendships will not be strong ropes,



and they will not hold through the storms that inevitably come. To build this strong rope, you must begin with creating a transparent environment with a friend. We are not saying you should share everything about yourself with everybody, but stop holding everybody at arm's length. Find one or two people you can be authentic with.

Make a point of also being the kind of friend that others can be real with. Lead the way in this by first being open yourself. Be that person your friend knows he can share struggles and victories with because you have already been willing to share with him about yours. Authenticity means making a conscious choice to be real rather than be who we think people want us to be. You do this knowing that you stand a chance of being hurt but believing that if you persevere, the friendship that awaits you will be worth it.

"As iron sharpens iron,
so a friend sharpens a friend.."
Proverbs 27:17

Step 2: Spend REAL time together

This may seem like a no-brainer but when was the last time you spent quality time with your friend? Time together is vital to growing deeper friendships. In the busy lives most of us lead today, time with friends doesn't just happen – it takes intentional planning. Start by setting aside an hour a week to meet for coffee to give your friendship an opportunity to grow. A strong friendship is developed because opportunities for quality time emerge from quantity time; the more time you spend together, the better chance you have of sharing quality experiences. Real friends give us reality checks that we need to stay on an even keel, and the more quality time you spend with a friend, the more real your friendship becomes. Taking the time to cultivate a true friendship based on a common bond and respect will give you profound insight into your own behavior and best interests. It will be time well invested.



Spending time with friends is one of the few pleasures in life that can cost you very little but reward you substantially. It is also proven to be one of the best ways to combat stress. Spending time with your friends can help melt away the cares of the world and leave you an all-around better person.

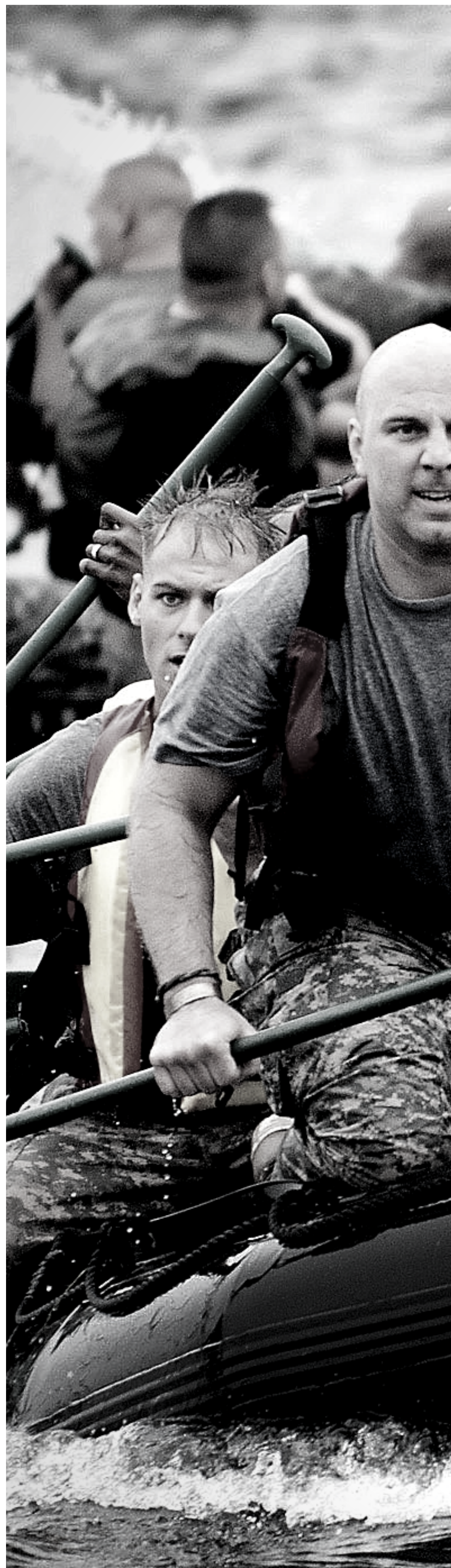
Always remember that your job, your hobbies, your things – these will all go away one day. It is your relationships that will last, and as you get older, you will find that the investments you have made in your relationships are the ones that will pay the biggest dividends in the end. The missing ingredient in so many lives in America is the power that comes from being together – the power of a friend.



Step 3: Be there in REAL struggles

There is nothing more discouraging than feeling like you are all alone in the midst of a trial. When we don't share the hurts, they hurt more. If you are connecting often with your friend, chances are good that you will be aware of when they are struggling. And hopefully, they will be able to do the same for you. Jesus never promised us a life without struggle when we choose to follow Him; in fact He did just the opposite. The Bible talks often about the struggles we will face. Jesus said in John 16:33 "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

A while back, my family and I went on a float down one of the rivers in our area. We stopped at Walmart and bought \$8 inner tubes to use. As our whole family – my wife, my sons and their wives, and our grandkids – were floating down the very calm river, I was wondering what would happen if we were to hit some class 5 rapids. How would we all fare in our \$8 tubes?



It hit me at the time how disastrous that would be! If I had myself and my family on a river with class 5 rapids, I would want to be in one of those big rafts with professionals in it with us, people who knew what they were doing because they had done it many times before. I would want to face the rapids with a team around me to help support and protect us through the rough spots.

As I was thinking through this it occurred to me, many Christians today are floating through life in an \$8 tube, and they don't have anyone else in the tube with them to help steer it through the rough spots. The thing is - the culture we are dealing with today is full of class 5 rapids, and too many of us are trying to navigate them in our \$8 tubes.

"A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated,
but two can stand back to back and conquer.
Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord
is not easily broken."
Ecclesiastes 4:12

Step 4: Show REAL humility

You might find yourself surprised to see humility included in a list of keys to better friendships.

We all need that friend who is close enough to have the right to speak into our lives. A close friend will be able to see those things that are blind spots to you – the areas where you may be hurting yourself or others without recognizing it.

It takes great strength and humility to open ourselves up to feedback and then to be willing to receive it and make changes accordingly.

True humility involves courage. With it, we seek not only to be understood but also to understand others. We listen to each other and value other people's viewpoints. We need to remember that God can and will speak to us through others, as long as the words they speak align with Scripture.

In His time here on earth, Jesus modeled humility in every aspect, demonstrating what REAL humility looks like. He called us to follow his example and be humble. And the best place to practice humility is in our relationships.



Step 5: Work Through REAL Conflict



When (not if) there is conflict in a friendship, we must resolve to work through it. Being unwilling to resolve conflicts when they arise is what dissolves most friendships, or at the very least, keeps them from growing deeper. Being open and honest, rather than attempting to hide our irritation or pain when we feel offended, is the first step towards healthy, godly conflict resolution. Be willing to fight to maintain your friendships! Satan wants to see us isolated. God wants to see us united in Him.

Too many times, to avoid conflict people protect, swallow, deny, and hide their feelings which often leads to either a big blowup later or them eventually growing apart. When we delay dealing with an issue between friends, the enemy gains a foothold and seeks to isolate us so he can break the ropes that bind us together.

We can agree to disagree about some things and still be friends working together for God's glory. We are called to be kind even to our enemy, so how much more must we be kind to someone who is a fellow believer?

Make a point of being honest in your friendships and deal with the molehill before it becomes a mountain. And always consider the priority of the relationship – people are more important than proving a point or being "right".

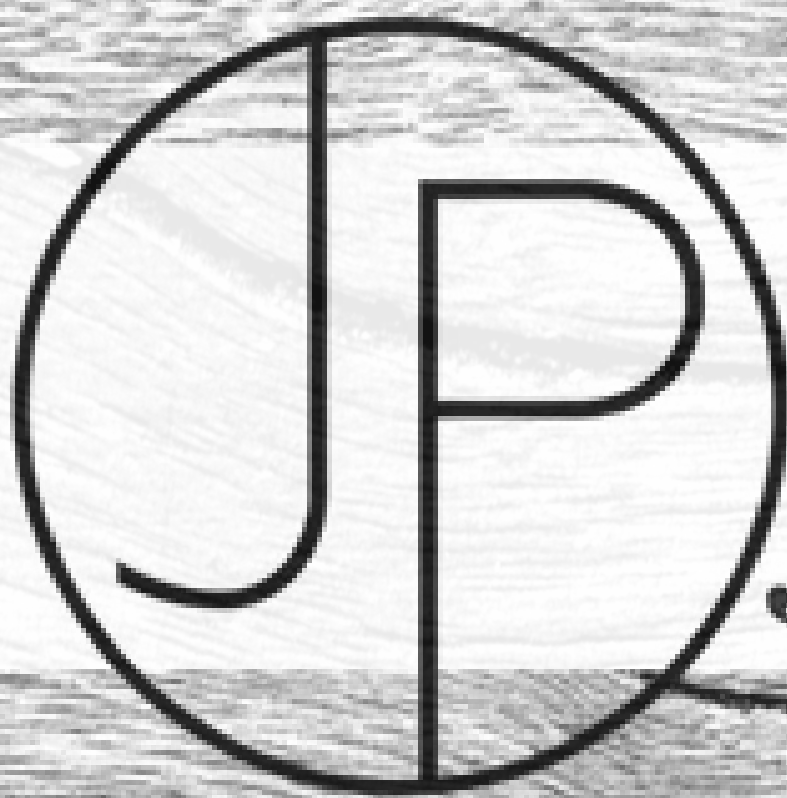


Before You Go

Thank you so much for downloading this book – we hope you found it a useful tool for strengthening all of the relationships you have in your life!

We would love to invite you to come and visit our website if you want to discover more about relationships, discipleship, disciple-making, and other topics. While you are there, please sign up to receive updates when we post new content or resources and feel free to contact us if you have any questions!

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