

A watercolor illustration featuring a variety of fresh fruits and flowers arranged in a circular pattern around the central text. The fruits include a whole strawberry, a sliced strawberry, a whole blueberry, a sliced blueberry, a whole grapefruit, and a sliced grapefruit. The flowers include pink and white blossoms with green leaves. The background is a light blue, textured watercolor wash.

THE  
*Fruitful  
Summer*  
GUIDE

#FRUITFULSUMMER | [LARACASEYSHOP.COM](http://LARACASEYSHOP.COM)



# CULTIVATE WHAT MATTERS

## *This summer*

*FIVE WEEKS TO STRONGER FRIENDSHIPS*

*JOYFUL CONNECTIONS*

*& NEW ADVENTURES*

### **INSIDE:**

YOUR GUIDE TO CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS

MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS *-printable!*

3 TOP TIPS FOR MAKING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS HAPPEN

FRIENDSHIP TENDING LIST *-printable!*

ADVICE FROM SOME OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS

SUMMER FRIENDSHIP GIFT GUIDE

FREE SUMMER ART PRINTS TO SHARE WITH FRIENDS



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# LET'S DO LIFE TOGETHER

I spent far too long believing that **I wasn't good at friendship.** I was "too busy," too stressed, inconsistent, forgetful, and I felt like I often had my foot in my mouth. Okay, I did have my foot in my mouth a lot. But! I realized I was chasing "perfect" in friendships, and that was holding me back from making *any connections at all*. As my friend Em says, "I will hold myself to a standard of grace, not perfection." **I didn't have to hold myself — or others — to a standard of perfection; I just had to do my best to love well through all my flaws and mess.** Living in my imperfections authentically with others and allowing them the freedom to do the same has helped me cultivate fruitful, lasting, joyful relationships.

My hope is that this #FruitfulSummer Guide encourages you to let go of "perfect" and give others permission to let go, too, opening up the possibility for **real connection.**

Let's get to it!





# *Fruitful Friendship*

IS PATIENT, IMPERFECT,  
FORGIVING, HUMBLE,  
ENCOURAGING, TRUTHFUL,  
TRUSTING, AND GRACE-FILLED.

FRUITFUL FRIENDSHIP  
CELEBRATES THE SIMPLE.  
FRUITFUL FRIENDSHIP ASKS  
A SECOND QUESTION.  
FRUITFUL FRIENDSHIP STAYS.

#FRUITFULSUMMER

GET  
GROWING

PLANT · TEND · ENJOY



3 TIPS FOR CULTIVATING  
MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIPS

# PLANT SEEDS IN GOOD SOIL.

## **TIP 1:** *Be together, in person.*

Surround yourself with friends who are traveling the path you want to take, and traveling it well. For me, that has meant soaking myself in local friendships (despite fears of aforementioned mess and imperfections!), intentionally getting to know our neighbors, and spending a lot of time with church family at our house, just enjoying being together. Last night, twenty of us descended on a local fast-food place for milkshakes and great conversation. It was simple and so good. It doesn't have to be complicated. Just get with people and talk about good things.

*\*If you are like I was not so long ago, and just read that and thought, "How in the world will I ever find community like that? I have no idea where to start!" Begin anywhere. Just be sure to begin. Break that soil of fear and doubt and take the leap of faith to plant what matters. When we first started to get to know people here locally, it was hard and awkward at times. But, it was so worth it. Little by little, peaches grow with sun and water and daily tending. Dig in!*

Also, [take online relationships offline](#). I love the InfluenceNet community and their commitment to making life mean something. These ladies are also committed to making meaningful connections off the world wide web and doing life together in person. (Join us here.)



## Conversation SEEDS

PLANT THESE & LISTEN IN

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

TELL ME YOUR STORY...

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN  
THINKING ABOUT THE  
MOST LATELY?

WHAT'S WEIGHING  
ON YOU TODAY?

HOW CAN I PRAY  
FOR YOU?

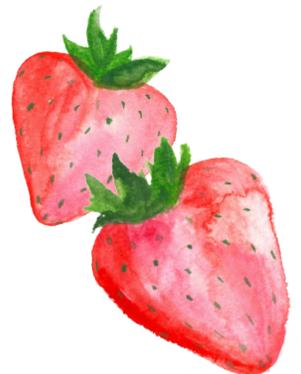
WHAT ARE YOU MOST  
LOOKING FORWARD TO  
THIS SUMMER?

WHAT IS ONE  
OF YOUR FAVORITE  
CHILDHOOD MEMORIES  
FROM SUMMER?

HOW CAN I  
ENCOURAGE YOU?

*This is my favorite. When someone asks that question, and wants to know the real answer, we have a choice. We can either brush it off as casual chit chat and say, "I'm fine," or take a leap of faith and make an intentional connection. And here's the key: when I answer someone honestly and tenderly, it gives the other person unspoken permission to do the same. It's a gift of time and intentional connection. Ask and really want to know the answer.*

PRINT THIS!



## Conversation SEEDS from Our Friends

**HOW ARE YOU REALLY DOING TODAY?**

EMILY LEY

**WHAT'S GOD SHOWING YOU OR TALKING TO YOU ABOUT THESE DAYS?**

**WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR LIFE THAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?**

KAREN STOTT

**IF YOU COULD GO BACK TO DAY ONE OF YOUR JOURNEY (IN BUSINESS OR PARENTHOOD OR WHATEVER JOURNEY YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN), WHAT PEP TALK WOULD YOU TELL YOURSELF?**

AMBER HOUSLEY

**HOW'S YOUR HEART?** I love that it's open-ended. They can answer about any area of their lives.

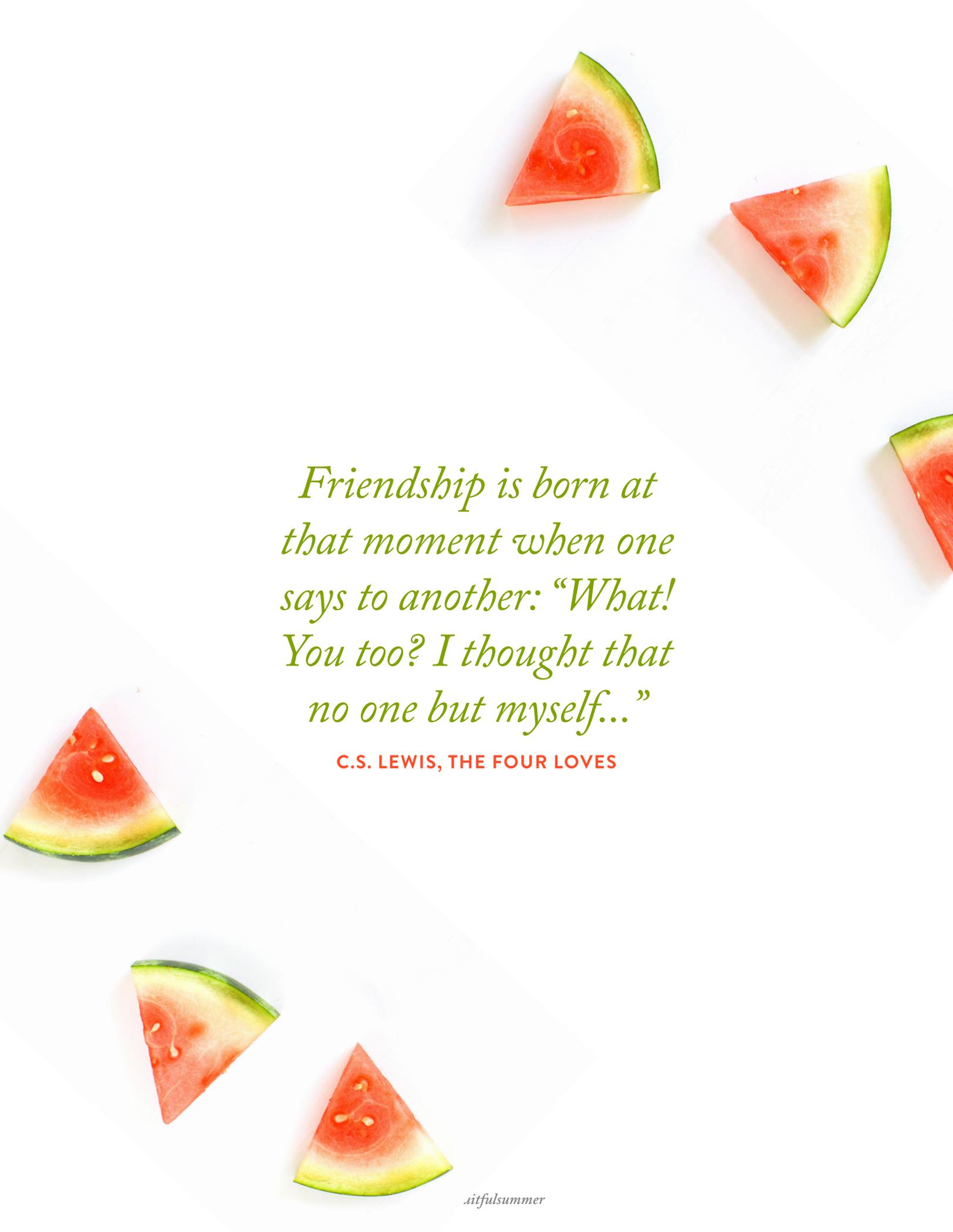
JESS CONNOLLY

I just like to ask questions. People want connection and friendship and want to be known, so I try to keep asking questions until we start to have those “me too” moments. Small talk is so awkward for me, so I look for something that we may have in common so the walls come down — and that usually involves me opening up, too. **ASK HOW SHE MET HER HUSBAND OR WHERE SHE GREW UP AND HOW SHE LANDED WHERE SHE IS NOW.** Meaningful relationships take time and investment, so just continue to reach out and be a listener. The walls will come down when people see how much you love them!

ERIN CARROLL

**ASK SOMEONE TO SHARE A MEANINGFUL STORY EITHER FROM RECENT LIFE EXPERIENCES OR FROM THEIR CHILDHOOD.** You can learn a lot about someone when they share stories that have significance to them. You can glean their favorite things or what fires them up from. I also think it's great to ask questions based on things you enjoy so that you can find common ground. Meaningful connections often happen when one person looks to another and says, “me too.” It makes people feel like they have shared experiences and can often make us feel less alone or isolated in any hardships we might encounter.

CARRIE MCQUAID

The image features several triangular slices of watermelon scattered across a white background. The slices are arranged in a loose, circular pattern around the central text. Each slice shows the red, juicy interior of the watermelon, the white rind, and a thin layer of green outer skin. The lighting is bright and even, highlighting the texture of the fruit.

*Friendship is born at  
that moment when one  
says to another: "What!  
You too? I thought that  
no one but myself..."*

**C.S. LEWIS, THE FOUR LOVES**

# TEND TO WHAT MATTERS, LITTLE BY LITTLE.

## **TIP 2:** *If it matters to you, tend it!*

**I forget things easily**, so I need lists right in front of my face. That's why I love my PowerSheets Tending List that stays out on my desk, reminding me where to focus. So, just for you, I created a FruitfulSummer Tending List to help you tend relationships! Find it on page 12 and make your list of people you want to grow with this summer! Maybe it's a new friendship, a revived marriage, a more joy-filled bond with your kids, or maybe there's a relationship that needs a fresh start.

### **Little by little, fruitful relationships can**

**happen.** In my garden, it's okay if I go a couple days without watering or weeding. But, if I were to forget about the garden altogether, I'd have a dried up amazon on my hands. Tend to your relationships in the same way, with little by little nurturing. You'll be amazed at what will grow!



## *Friendship Tending Ideas:*

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Simple but powerful: [tell your friend](#) you want to grow in friendship with them. When people have done this to me, it is such a gift!

---

Leave a [pep talk note](#) where your friend will least expect it. Get creative and think of what would delight you.

---

Send a [encouraging postcard](#) with words you know she needs to hear.

---

Don't just think it and let it go — text or email your friend to [let them know](#) how much you appreciate them.

---

[Invite your friend](#) to dinner, to a park playdate, over for simple couch time to talk about life, or to explore the farmer's market with you this weekend (my favorites that I did this week!).

---

[Leave flowers and a note](#) of encouragement on her doorstep. A friend did this to me a couple days ago and it was an answer to prayer. It changed my whole week and grew our relationship.

---

Just check-in to say “Hi, how are you?” and really listen. [It doesn't have to be complicated](#). The simple act of listening in can change everything!

---



*PRINT THIS! Make your list of friends you want to water to and grow this summer.  
Post it somewhere you'll see it often.*

## FRIENDSHIP TENDING LIST

<i>name</i>	<i>how I'll tend to them</i>	<i>watered!</i>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>name</i>	<i>how I'll tend to them</i>	<i>watered!</i>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>name</i>	<i>how I'll tend to them</i>	<i>watered!</i>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>name</i>	<i>how I'll tend to them</i>	<i>watered!</i>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

#FRUITFULSUMMER



# ENJOY! CELEBRATE EACH OTHER

## **TIP 3:** Celebrate the simple things together.

Celebrate each other's little by little progress or big leaps taken. Celebrate big and small decisions made. Grab a box of popsicles, a watermelon, or a basket of fresh peaches and spend intentional time telling your friend all the things you are proud of her for. What a delightful surprise this would be, wouldn't it? Celebrate "friend-iversaries," answered prayers, and courage. Celebrate what you want to see more of!



PRINT THE NEXT PAGE & SEND TO YOUR FRIENDS! →



# HOW DO YOU BUILD FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIPS?



**EMILY LEY**  
**@EMILYLEY**  
**EMILYLEY.COM**

My closest friends and most fruitful relationships are built on a solid foundation of love. That means loving someone big, wholeheartedly and relentlessly. I try and make important notes in my planner or iCal to remember things that are important to my friends so that they know I love and support them. If a friend has an important meeting, I'll make a note in my planner and send her some encouragement the morning of. I think unsolicited love like that goes a long way. A little surprise saying, "I remembered that this is important to you - It's important to me, too" is like receiving a big, bright delivery of flowers at your front door.

My biggest tip for building a really fruitful relationship is don't hide your weaknesses. Stay humble and soft, and admit when you're wrong. Ask for correction and ask for help. Say you're sorry and grow. I cannot think of a better way to build a crazy intimate and fruitful relationship besides being real and being honest about who you are and what you need.



**JESS CONNOLLY**  
**@JESSACONNOLLY**  
**JESSCONNOLLY.COM**



**KAREN STOTT**  
**@INTENTIONALHOME**  
**KARENSTOTTBLOG.COM**

Show up. Be present. Don't be afraid to ask the scary hard questions, because on the other side of the momentary awkward is another layer peeling back that lets the very best parts of people come forth. We need to do more friendship on purpose instead of waiting for them to happen. For years, I pouted about not having many friends. But then God whispered to my heart, "Do something about it. There's someone out there feeling the same way. Maybe you should stop complaining and reach out yourself." Instead of being sad that I had no where to go, I began texting friends to meet up at the park or come over for coffee. Nothing about my circumstances changed. I didn't move locations or magically join a community that was already alive and thriving. It started with me, where I was, with what I had. It started with me reaching out and asking myself if there was something I could do to gain the friendships I desired. It didn't take long to see the fruit of those choices bursting forth.

Set aside a dedicated "date time" time far in advance. I like to say, "if it isn't on the calendar, it doesn't exist." Dates are needed not just for spouses, but also for friendships and family.

**AMBER HOUSLEY**  
**@AMBERHOUSLEY**  
**AMBERHOUSLEY.COM**



Make the friendships happen and invite! If you want someone to grab coffee with, then invite someone to meet you for a cup of coffee. Ask questions, show others that you're interested in knowing them and that you're really listening. My friends and I have said that all we want is to have true authentic friendships. So love your friends the way Jesus loves them and don't expect perfection. Provide a safe place for grace and life and authenticity. Put yourself out there. Be the friend you want to have. Open your doors and let them see your mess. Serve them. Show up with coffee, send a text to say you're thinking of them. Pick up their kids and keep them for the afternoon so she can grocery shop or go to a hair appointment. Life is so much sweeter when we get to do it with other people!



**ERIN CARROLL**  
**@ERINAKINCARROLL**  
**ERINAKINCARROLL.COM**



**CARRIE MCQUAID**  
**@CARRIEGRACESHOP**  
**CARRIEGRACESHOP.COM**

Just spend time with someone. There isn't a greater gift than investing in someone else and listening to their interests. We often glamorize things and make things Instagram-worthy, but I often find the best conversations are ones that could never fit into a square. They are conversations filled with swapping stories and laughing over a warm drink. I also think it's important to follow up with people and continue to spend time with them. It is easy to hide behind the word "busy," but making time for people is what leads to fruitful friendships.



THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT  
IS LOVE, JOY, PEACE,  
FORBEARANCE, KINDNESS,  
GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS,  
GENTLENESS AND  
SELF-CONTROL.

GALATIANS 5:22-34

*FREE PRINTABLE for you and your friends!*



# Make it Fruitful

#FRUITFULSUMMER

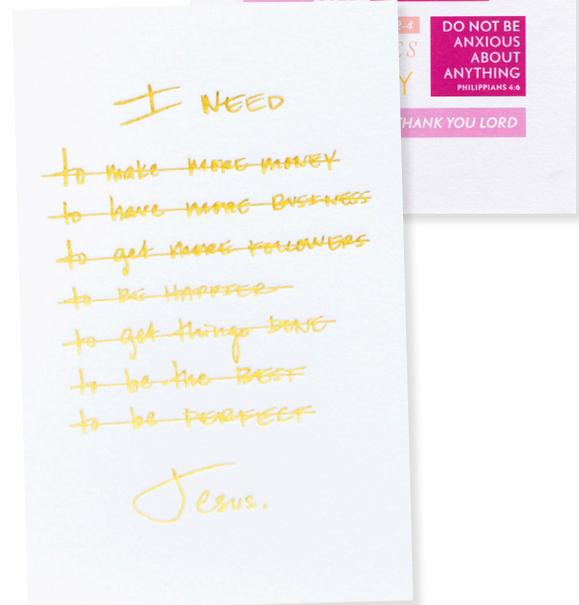
# IN OUR FRUIT BASKET

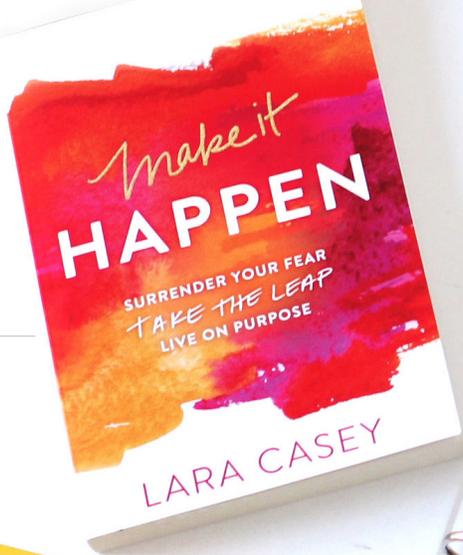
*Our Summer Picks to Grow What Matters*

SEND A FRIEND A  
LOVING REMINDER  
*of what matters most  
with an encouraging  
Desk Card.*



*Twenty bright, fun Encouragement Postcards means there are so many ways to REACH OUT TO SOMEONE and show them you're cheering them on.*





**START A BOOK CLUB** and spend an hour or two each week devouring a meaningful book with new friends. We suggest *Make It Happen*, written by Lara to help women live a more purposeful life.

**WORK THROUGH YOUR GOALS WITH AN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER** and our *PowerSheets!* There are even more new relationships to be built in our exclusive Facebook Group.



**TUCK OUR SCRIPTURE CARDS INTO LUNCH BAGS**, notes of encouragement, or leave them as a surprise for your friends and family!



**PREPARE FOR A MEANINGFUL MARRIAGE WITH FUN SOUTHERN DOINS.** *The Southern Weddings Planner is chock full of ideas to bring you and your fiancé together!*

**KEEP TRACK OF FRIEND-DATES** and important reminders to tend to others in the *Simplified Planner* by Emily Ley.



**WORK THROUGH A DEVOTIONAL WITH A FRIEND.** *The Abide Devotional from the Naptime Diaries shop focuses on the nine Fruits of the Spirit.*

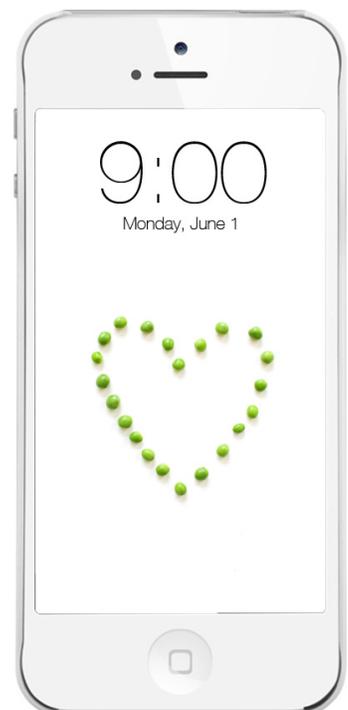
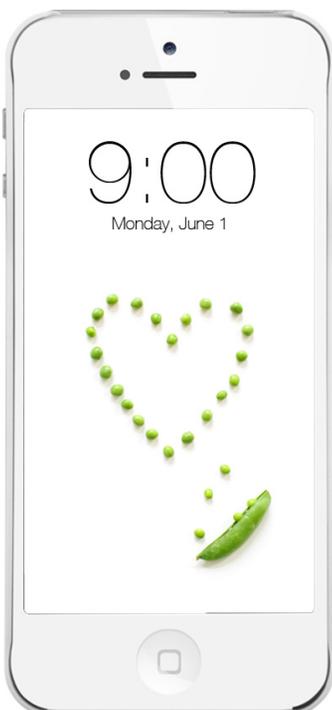
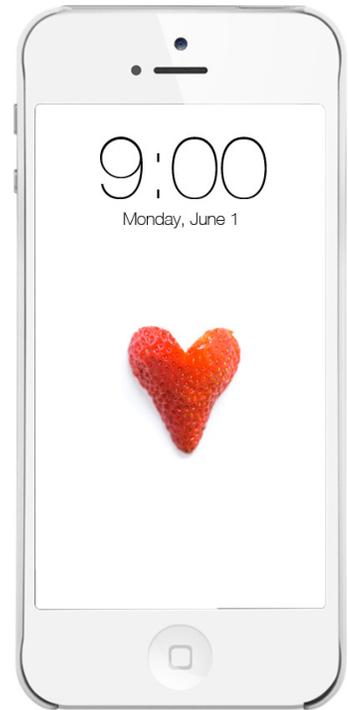
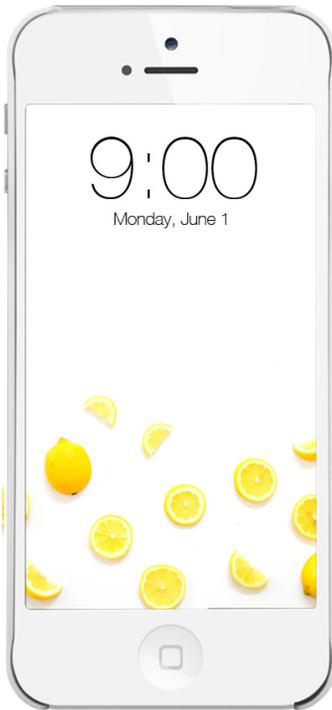


**GROW IN COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR SPOUSE.** *The Marriage Field Guide from Val Marie Paper will walk you through the important parts of a strong marriage.*



# FREE FRUITFUL SUMMER DOWNLOADS

FIND THEM HERE.



*I make it  
Happen*  
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\* EXCLUDES POWERSHEETS





*Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind.*

*“Pooh?” he whispered.*

*“Yes, Piglet?”*

*“Nothing,” said Piglet,  
taking Pooh’s hand.*

*“I just wanted to be sure of you.”*

A.A. MILNE, WINNIE-THE-POOH



# *Cheers to a #Fruitful Summer*

SEND THIS TO A FRIEND AND  
ENJOY IT TOGETHER

