

SUMMER CHECKLIST REBOOT

10 Ways to Live with More Connection

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HELLO, FRIEND!

Back in the day when my kids were tiny and summer stared us down with eight empty, sun-soaked weeks, I did what every good Pinterest loyalist did and made an official summer checklist. The beach! The zoo! Something obscurely referenced only as “Ice Treasures”!

I don’t remember these checklists changing our lives. Summer always shook out in its typical, sweaty slog. Good days and bad. Sun and rain. More boredom than we’d planned.

But tucked in between, we made slime. We went fishing. We set our intentions and some of them stuck.

I’m proposing a summer checklist reboot, hand-crafted for the moment we’re in.

The moment? Divisive, restless, medium-cranky, and weirdly lonely. There’s plenty of arguing, boatloads of sadness, a lingering pandemic, and we’d rather not talk about gas prices. Almost everything feels sideways at best.

The fix? Connection.

The messy-muddle, kitchen’s-a-wreck, half-out-of-steam, desperate-to-laugh kind of connection.

Now more than ever, hope and resilience require some thoughtful togetherness. We need to remember why “we” remains one of the very best ideas. What if we determined this summer to find our way back to each other?

I’ve made it as simple as possible: ten baby steps, each of which builds our confidence and muscle memory for the next. We can do this together.

Want to?

YES

ABSOLUTELY!

HERE'S TO OUR SUMMER CHECKLIST REBOOT!

*Fine print: There will be no final exam or report cards. As with every summer checklist in the history of humanity, every check is its own reward. Do what you can, with zero pressure or guilt. This is not a to-do list. It’s an invitation to find belonging in ways that make sense for you.

SUMMER OF CONNECTION CHECKLIST

- PAY ATTENTION**
Slow down. Look up at the sky. Listen to the sounds of your place. Do it again tomorrow. We can't love what we don't notice.
- SAY HELLO**
Practice making eye contact and saying hi to your neighbors. [Consider this our warm-up exercise.]
- EAT LOCAL**
Inch into your community by dining close to home. That might include restaurants, farmer's markets, food trucks, or the kids selling lemonade up the street. It's a great way to support the people near you and make new connections.
- WALK-AND-TALK**
Think of someone you'd like to get to know a little better and invite them on a walk. It's a low-pressure way to build connection while getting in those steps.
- COLD BREW/ICED TEA MEET-UP**
This is all about easing in, friends. Pick a corner table or a bench in the shade and invite someone to meet you there.
- PARK PIZZA**
Grab a hot pizza from your favorite spot. Spread out a blanket at a nearby park. Send out the calls. Adults can chat while kids run wild.
- PORCH BRUNCH**
What could be simpler and more unexpected than a porch invitation on a Saturday morning? It's a fun way to ease into a busy weekend. Food can be anything from a homemade frittata to a box of doughnuts.
- POPCORN + ICE WATER**
Practice enjoying conversation and company in your own space without the pressure of a meal. It really isn't about the food!
- TACOS!**
Tacos make everything more fun! Invite a few people over and assign ingredients. [This part is key as we learn to keep it simple and ask for help.] Bonus points for using paper plates.
- ON-THE-FLY "BRING WHAT YOU HAVE" DINNER**
Real connection isn't about being in control or trying to impress. It's about being together over the most ordinary parts of life. These last-minute hodge-podge meals are often the most memorable. Double bonus points for letting the house stay visibly lived-in and well-loved.