

# the modern domestic woman



HOW TO BUILD YOUR CIRCLE  
(ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE STARTING  
FROM SCRATCH)



# Hey, friend!

So, you've landed somewhere new. Or maybe you've been here a while, but the loneliness is starting to speak a little louder.

Maybe your family is far away. Or too close in a not-so-great way.

Maybe you're outgrowing old connections. Maybe you're just ready to stop white-knuckling life alone.

Whatever brought you here, we want you to know:

- You're allowed to build a circle that holds you.
- A chosen circle. One built on purpose, not pressure.
- One that feels like safety, not stress.
- One where you can breathe, not perform.

This guide is here to help you build that—slowly, intentionally, and in alignment with your values.

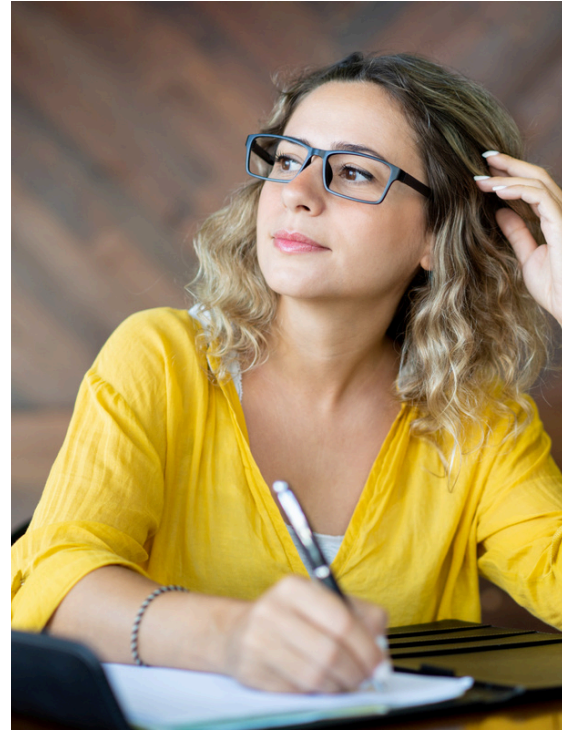


## Step 1: Let Yourself Want It (and Get Clear on What It Is)

Craving connection isn't a flaw. It's a basic human need.

But often, we shame ourselves for wanting closeness—especially if we've been burned before, or we've internalized the "I'm fine on my own" narrative.

This first step is about allowing yourself to want more and figuring out what more actually means for you.



## Tap into Your Values to Guide You

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### Discovering and Defining Your Values: A Guide to Living with Purpose

Our values play a central role in defining who we are and how we navigate life, but they can evolve over time as we experience new stages, challenges, or changes in our personal or professional lives. As we grow, our priorities shift, and our values may adapt to reflect these changes. This guide provides:

- a structured approach to help you identify what truly matters to you right now
- how those values influence your choices
- a helpful tool for reflection, goal-setting, or realigning your actions with your authentic self

If you find it challenging to pinpoint or understand your values, you don't have to do it alone—working with a [therapist](#) can offer valuable insights. A therapist can help you explore your inner world more deeply, uncover hidden beliefs, and clarify which values are most meaningful at this point in your life.

By tapping into this wisdom, you can create a stronger sense of purpose and direction and align your life with what truly resonates with you.

What we hold dear influences everything from our decisions and relationships to how we respond to challenges. But values aren't always static; they can shift as we grow, take on new roles, or experience life's unexpected turns.

This can sometimes create an internal tug-of-war between who we've been and who we're becoming. That's why taking time to reflect on your values is so important—it helps you realign with what truly matters to you in this season of life.

We've created a [values guide](#) designed to bring clarity and focus.

### Positive Self-Talk:

"I'm allowed to need people. I deserve friendships that nourish and support me."  
"My desire for connection is valid, not desperate."  
"I'm building something honest, and I get to define what that looks like."



## Step 2: Start Small (and Start Where You Are)

You don't have to walk into a packed room and charm the crowd. Start with one soft place. One safe space. One consistent point of contact.

Here are some real-life starting points:

- **Join a Supportive Group** – MDW hosts free community events focused on a variety of needs and topics and two moms support groups. Designed for connection, the vibe at all our gatherings is “show up as you are.” Learn more about our in-person gatherings under “Coming Events” at [mdwcares.com](https://mdwcares.com)
- **Follow the Energy** – Say yes to that invite. Go to that garden center event. Browse your local library, art center, or yoga studio. Often, people craving connection are looking for you, too.
- **Use Social Media Intentionally** – No doom scrolling. Instead, follow local businesses, mom collectives, mental health orgs (like MDW), and event hubs. Look for what lights you up—not just what fills the time.
- **Volunteer for Something that Matters** – Show up where your values align. Whether it's a food pantry, reproductive rights org, or a community garden, people who care about the same things tend to find each other.



## Step 3: Nurture What You Find

True connection doesn't happen in a single coffee date—it builds over time. This step is about tending to what's already forming, even if it's just a flicker.

Reach out. Follow up. Create moments of care.

Who's someone I've connected with lately that I'd like to nurture a deeper friendship with? What did I like best about them?

### Positive Self-Talk:



"I have the capacity to show up for others without losing myself."

"Consistency is love—I'm capable of building steady relationships."

"I know I've been burned before, but I can find people who accept me for who I am."



## Step 4: Don't Force What Doesn't Fit

There's a quiet grief that comes with outgrowing relationships. Even when nothing "bad" happened. Even when you still care.

Sometimes, the people who fit us at one season in life no longer feel aligned in the next—and that's not a failure. That's growth.

This step is about recognizing when a connection no longer serves you—not because the other person is wrong or bad, but because you've changed. And your needs have changed, too.



If you find yourself constantly shrinking, explaining, justifying, or performing in a friendship... it's time to pause.

- If you leave a hangout more drained than nourished...
- If you dread the text, but feel guilty not replying...
- If your boundaries are repeatedly tested, ignored, or mocked...

You don't owe anyone your energy simply because you once shared space or history. This isn't about ghosting or burning bridges. It's about choosing alignment over obligation.

You're allowed to say, "This no longer works for me," with compassion and honesty.

The right connections won't make you question your worth. They'll feel like exhale—not exhaustion.

### Journal Prompts:

- What types of relationships or social dynamics leave me feeling depleted, invisible, or anxious?
- Where am I overextending myself out of guilt or habit?
- What would it feel like to release something that no longer serves me—with grace?
- What boundaries would protect my energy and honor my growth?

## Step 5: Let MDW Be Your Starting Point

We know how overwhelming it can feel to take that first step.

You want to build your circle.

You want connection.

You want support.

But... where do you even begin?

That's why MDW exists.



## At MDW, you can:



♥ Join a [Support Group](#) that speaks to your lived experience—whether that's motherhood, anxiety, friendships, or just being a woman trying to navigate this wild world.

♥ Attend one of our [Coming Events](#) where conversations unfold naturally, and laughter always ensues.

♥ Read our [monthly Mini Mag](#), follow us on [Instagram](#), or just hang a bit until you feel ready. (No shame in the slow approach!)

## Journal Prompts:

- What kind of support would I love to receive from a community right now?
- What parts of myself am I ready to share with others?
- What's one low-pressure way I could connect with MDW or another local space this week?

# You deserve a circle that...



- Celebrates your wins (even the quiet ones)
- Sits with you in the mess without rushing to fix it
- Texts “you good?” and actually listens to your answer
- Respects your boundaries and never makes you feel guilty for having them
- Reminds you that you are not alone—even on the hard, heavy, ugly days

You deserve relationships that feel safe, reciprocal, and real.

You deserve a circle that doesn't just include you—but makes room for you to be exactly who you are: healing, evolving, figuring it out.

And if you haven't found that yet? That's okay.

Building a circle takes time. It takes intention. It takes showing up—and letting yourself be seen. And here's the thing: you don't have to do that alone.

We're so glad you found MDW.

- ➔ You can start here.
- ➔ You can start slowly.

And whenever you're ready—we're holding the door open.





# About the Author: Elizabeth Rago

Creative Strategist • Community Architect • Women's Health Advocate



Elizabeth is a word-loving, community-building powerhouse with a gift for turning complex ideas into connection-worthy content. As a Senior-Level Marketing and Content Strategist, she's spent the past two decades blending storytelling with strategy—crafting compelling messaging for mental health organizations, women's lifestyle brands, and yes, even the high-stakes world of RFPs (because a well-structured sentence can absolutely win business).

By day, she shapes narratives that drive results. By night, she's managing dinner, debate club (aka parenting teens), and the emotional logistics of modern womanhood—with a mug of Earl Grey and a sense of humor that's seen some things.

After weathering a difficult season in her own life, Elizabeth realized how lonely it can feel for women navigating hard things—especially when they're expected to do it quietly. That experience led her to create MDW: a resource-rich, no-nonsense space where women can find mental health support, practical tools, lifestyle convos, plant pics, and real talk that doesn't shy away from the messy parts.

Whether she's interviewing therapists, spotlighting women-owned businesses, or coming through Pinterest for the next MDW Mini Magazine, Elizabeth leads with equal parts strategy and soul. She never underestimates the therapeutic power of a well-placed meme, and building a strong community is an act of resistance.

You can find her writing, editing, and building meaningful spaces at [MDWcares.com](https://MDWcares.com) or connect with her on [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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