



**WALK
YOUR WAY**
to better

99 WALKS THAT WILL
CHANGE YOUR LIFE

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Exclusive Excerpt: Walk 50:
People are Like Bananas

My daughter likes her bananas green. Once they turn yellow, she declares them mushy and inedible. She shares this preference with my dad, who also likes his bananas more green than yellow. My son and I both prefer our bananas fully ripe and yellow. This means that when we go to the grocery store, we are likely to buy two different bunches of bananas—one green and one yellow. Now here's the tricky part: we have one large, beautiful wooden fruit bowl that sits on our counter, typically filled with apples, oranges, nectarines, and, of course, bananas. But if we put both bunches of bananas in the fruit bowl next to each other, my daughter's green bananas quickly turn yellow.

Why? Apparently, bananas give off a compound called ethylene that encourages their under ripe neighbors to catch up fast. As a result, bananas in a bunch achieve an equal level of ripeness at the same time.

Like bananas, research shows that you are very likely to resemble the people in your bunch. You are likely to hold many of the same beliefs, achieve similar levels of financial and professional success, and share similar characteristics of weight and wellness. If your friends are happier, you are likely to be happier.

Jim Rohn famously suggested that “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” Although research suggests it is not that simple, there can be no doubt that the people with whom you surround yourself have a profound influence on your life. That means that you can accelerate your growth and accomplishments by changing your social circles and spending time with people who embody the life to which you aspire.

Of course, in practicality, this is not so easy. If you want to be a millionaire, it might not be practical to find five millionaires to suddenly become your besties. And there are countless stories of super successful people who have achieved great things despite less than optimal surroundings and circumstances.

But it does suggest that making some shifts in how you spend your time and who you spend it with can impact your ability to live the life you want. Let's consider happiness. If each day you drop your kids at school and meet a group of four other moms for coffee who spend that coffee hour complaining about their lives, chances are you will join in that conversation and focus your attention on all of the negatives in your own life.

Conversely, if your morning coffee group is comprised of a group of positive people who focus on gratitude and bring hope and enthusiasm for the day ahead, you are likely to leave your morning coffee feeling hopeful and enthusiastic. Staying with the coffee example... if the group with whom you have morning coffee tend to start their day with donuts, you are highly likely to follow suit. Conversely, if your crew opts instead to start their day with an egg white omelet, you are likely to adopt a similar habit.

So, what does this mean? Does this mean we should drop our old friends because they don't "measure up" to our ideal or don't share our goals and ambition? No. More recent research suggests that you are not simply the average of the five people with whom you spend the most time. Rather, all of the people in your social circle have influence. So, you don't have to "drop" your closest friends. Rather, you can expand your circle to bring in new people and new ideas.

If your morning coffee crew orders donuts every morning and kicks off the day with a flood of negativity, perhaps you take one or two days a week to skip morning coffee and take a walk. Who knows, maybe you will be the ripe banana that encourages them to join you.

On today's walk, think about the people with whom you spend the most time. Do their values, habits and goals align with yours? If not, consider expanding your circle.

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