



**DON'T NEGLECT
TO CONNECT**

- Americans are getting **lonelier**. In 2021, 12% of U.S. adults said they did not have any close friends, up from 3% in 1990 (“**The State of American Friendship: Change, Challenges, and Loss,**” Survey Center on American Life, 2021)
- **Social disconnection**, which is rising across age groups, appears to have worsened after 2012, when smartphones and social media became virtually ubiquitous. An international study of high school students found that between 2012 and 2018, school loneliness increased in 36 of 37 countries (Twenge, J. M., et al., *Journal of Adolescence*, Vol. 93, No. 1, 2021).

American Psychological Association



It's long been known that **a community of supportive relationships** improves our quality of life and can even help us recover from illness and surgery. **Regularly interacting** with a wide variety of social ties, both weak and strong, fortifies our satisfaction, and a rich diversity of ties provides more significant benefits to well-being.

Gina Simmons Schneider, Ph.D.

Psychology Today



Studies have shown a correlation between **physical well-being** and your **social circle**. Having good friends is clinically proven to improve your mental well-being and physical health. Keeping a good friendship circle can also encourage you to avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits such as excessive drinking.

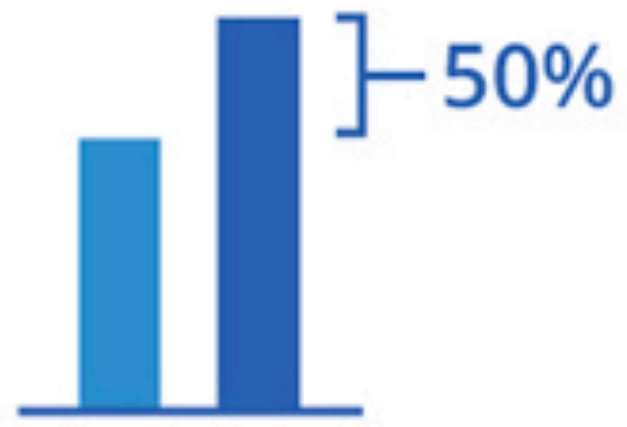
Midkent College



Adults with **strong social connections** have a **reduced risk** of many **significant health problems**, including depression, high blood pressure and an unhealthy body mass index (BMI). In fact, studies have found that older adults who have meaningful relationships and social support are likely to live longer than their peers with fewer connections.

Mayo Clinic Staff





50% increased chance of longevity



stronger gene expression for immunity (research by Steve Cole, UCLA)



lower rates of anxiety and depression



higher self-esteem and empathy



better emotion regulation skills



Social connection creates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical well being.



worse for health than smoking, high blood pressure or obesity



higher inflammation at the cellular level



higher susceptibility to anxiety and depression



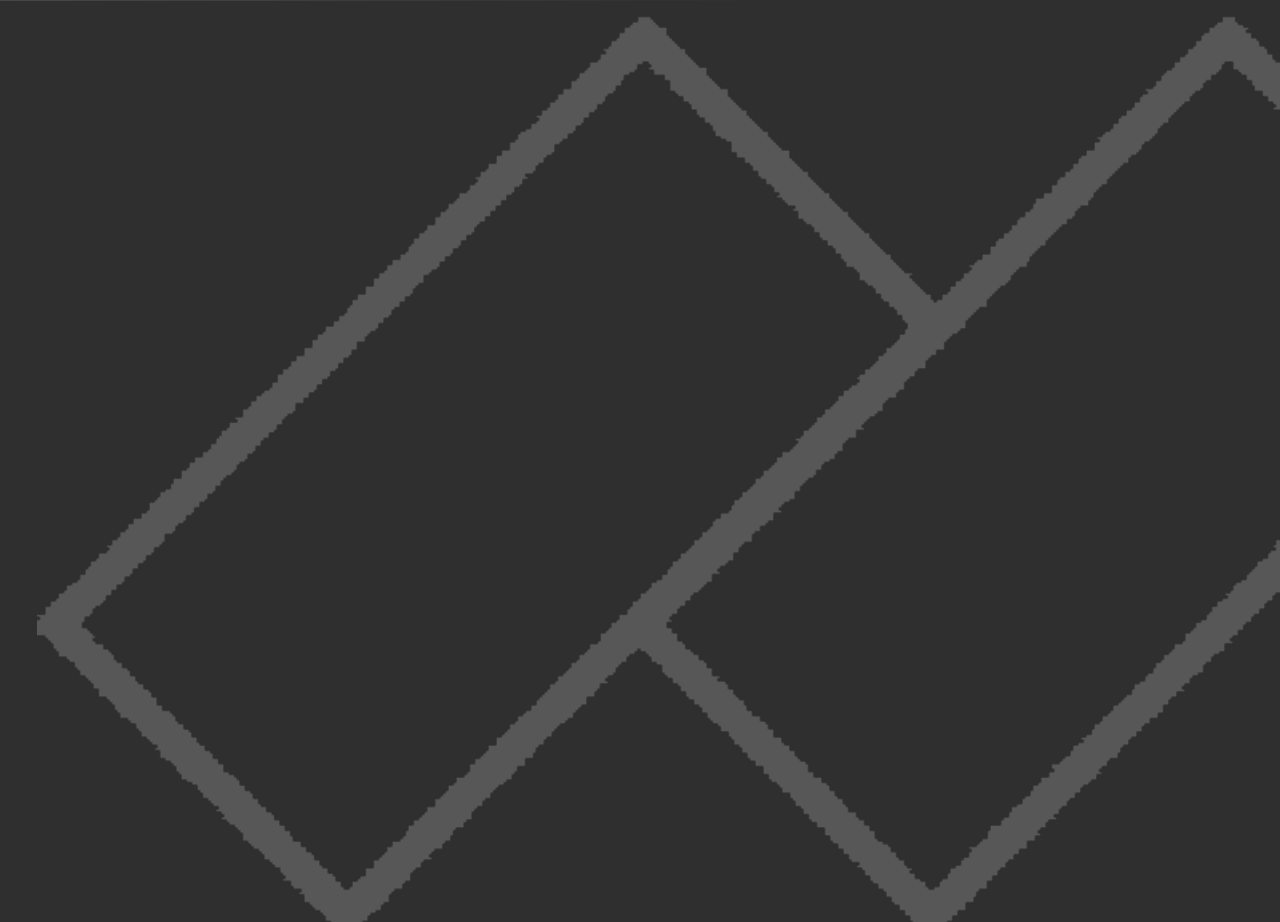
slower recovery from disease



increased antisocial behavior and violence



suicide



9 **Two are better than one**, because they have a good return for their **labor**: 10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to **help** them up. 11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep **warm**. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered, two can **defend** themselves. **A cord** of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12



- Blood pressure reactivity is lower when people talk to a supportive friend rather than a friend whom they feel ambivalent about (**Holt-Lunstad, J., et al., *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2007**)
- Participants who have a friend by their side while completing a tough task have less heart rate reactivity than those working alone (**Kamarck, T. W., et al., *Psychosomatic Medicine*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 1990**)
- In one study, people even judged a hill to be less steep when they were accompanied by a friend (**Schnall, S., et al., *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 44, No. 5, 2008**).

- Scientists studying friendship have even found similar brain activity among friends in regions responsible for a range of functions, including motivation, reward, identity, and sensory processing (**Güroğlu, B., Child Development Perspectives, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2022**).
- When Wheatley and her colleagues collected fMRI data on people in a social network, closer friends had more similar brain activity when watching a series of video clips (**Nature Communications, Vol. 9, 2018**)

WHO WE DO LIFE WITH - AFFECTS
US **POWERFULLY**



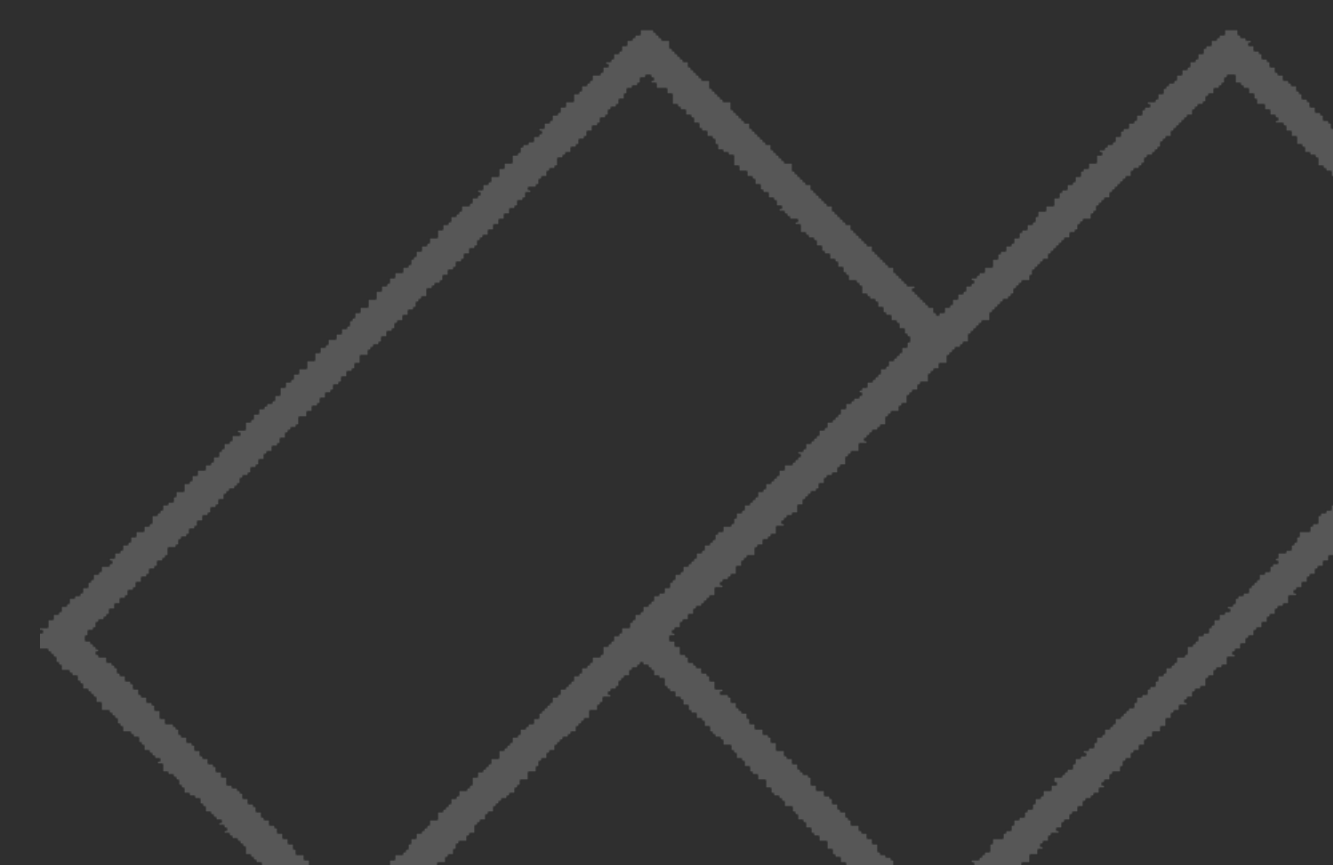
Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.” NIV

Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” - NKJV

1 Corinthians 15:33



COMMUNITY
REQUIRES
COMMITMENT



24 And **let us consider how we may spur one another on** toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-26



WHEN YOU COMMIT

CONSIDER OTHERS



3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 **not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.** 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Philippians 2:3-5



WHEN YOU COMMIT

KEEP MEETING



24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 **not giving up meeting together**, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-26



WHEN YOU ENGAGE

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER



WHEN YOU ENGAGE

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER



24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, **but encouraging one another**—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-26



TAKE CARE

WHAT YOU ADD TO THE POT



39 One of them went out into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine and picked as many of its gourds as his garment could hold. When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were. 40 The stew was poured out for the men, but as they began to eat it, they cried out, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it.

2 Kings 4:39-40



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