



# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

The biggest health issue in America today is not heart disease, cancer, diabetes, smoking or obesity. According to Dr. Vivek Murthy, the recent Surgeon General of the United States, the biggest health issues in America today are the effects that come from feeling lonely and socially disconnected.

What can you do to cultivate and maintain a satisfying social connections to increase your chances of enjoying a long, healthy, happy life? Here are five suggestions:

- ◆ **Maintain contact with existing friends and reconnect with your old friends.** Make an effort to spend time to be with the people you care about.
- ◆ **Remember, it is the quality of social relationships that really matters.** An introvert might need one confidante not to feel lonely, whereas an extrovert might require two, three or four.
- ◆ **If you use social media, communicate;** use Facebook so that you can meet up somewhere. If used as a place to withdraw socially, it can deepen your sense of loneliness.
- ◆ **Create a setting where people can let their guards down and safely confide in each other.** Speaking about feelings with authenticity and listen to others with empathy, compassion and no judgement.

**One of the best ways to forge and maintain friendships is through built-in regularity** — something you can plan around that is always on the schedule at least twice a month – join a group, have regular game nights, go hiking, get more active with your place of workshop or in local government.



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