

Creating Connections Friends & Community as We Age?

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Patience is the road to wisdom

Koa Kalia Yang

Two of the greatest qualities
to have in life are:



PATIENCE and
WISDOM

What am I doing here?

❖ PIE

❖ Definitions

❖ Recipe

❖ Thoughts, Ideas, Skills, Tools

❖ Questions

Intended Goals

- 1) Have self-awareness when connecting with others.
- 2) Be familiar with the elements of relationships.
- 3) Learn simple activities to increase social engagement.

“Human beings need recognition as much as they need food and water”

David Brooks

How to Know a Person-The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen

“There are roughly eight billion people on earth, and each one of them sees the world in their own unique way.”

Fact: We have an epidemic of loneliness in the United States, and lacking connection increases the risk of premature death to levels comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, according to a new advisory from the U.S. Surgeon General.

“The physical consequences of poor connection can be devastating, including a 29% increased risk of heart disease; a 32% increased risk of stroke; and a 50% increased risk of developing dementia for older adults” reports Dr. Stephanie Cacioppo, Behavioral Neuroscientist

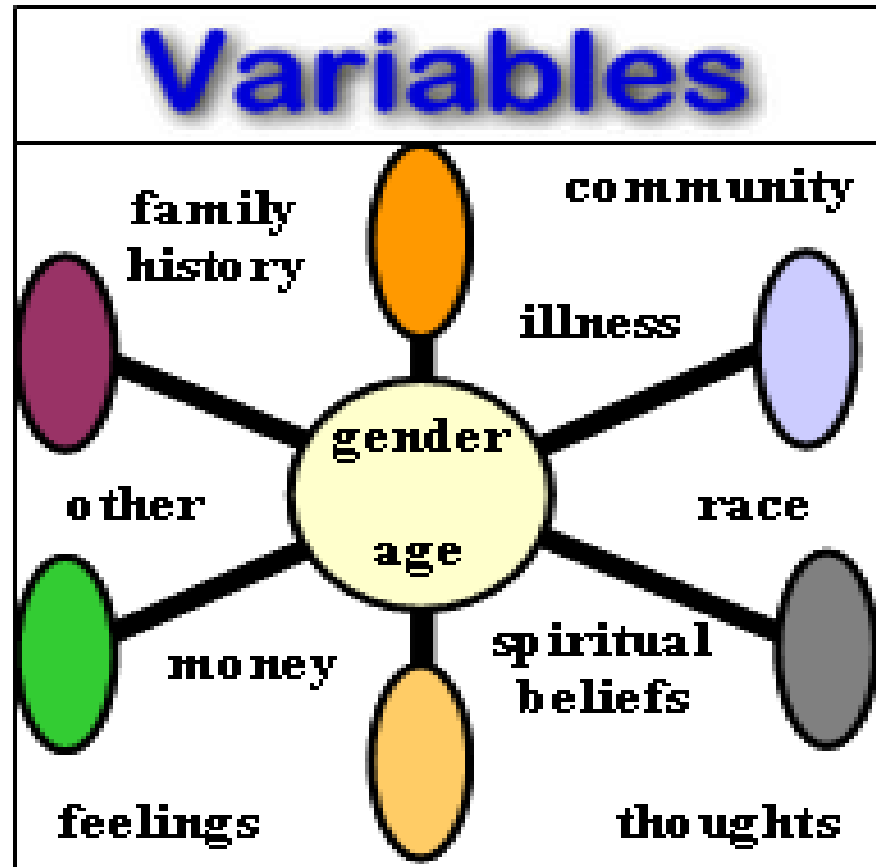
Inquiring Minds Want to Know

- How do we creatively increase social connections?
- How does someone go from “me” to “us”independence to inter-dependence?
- How can we balance care for ourselves & others?

Lets begin with PIE!

It is always about the food

Person in Environment (PIE)



You may

know me...

but you have no idea
WHO I AM

If You Really Knew Me

Great Things About Me

(What People Like and Admire About Me & I Like About Myself)

What Is Important To Me

How To Support Me

(What you need to know or do to support me)

Great Things About Me

(What People Like and Admire About Me & I Like About Myself)

- Determined
- Gutsy gal
- Adventurous
- True, blue friend
- Loyal and dedicated
- Fashionista
- Hard Worker
- Great Singer
- Good sense of humor

What Is Important To Me

- My independence
- A thriving social life
- Being organized
- Learning
- Routines
- Filtered ice cold water
- Singing with the Raging Grannies
- Close relationship
- Healthy diet and exercise
- Social Justice

How To Support Me

(What you need to know or do to support me)

- Spend time with me
- Listen to my ideas and thoughts with your heart
- Help me figure out a problem –if I ask
- Stay with me if I'm upset
- Read to me
- Play me favorite music
- Talk to me not about me
- Provide a calm quiet environment
- Include me in the decisions that impact me life and well bring



Definitions

The New York Times article “If Loneliness Is an Epidemic, How Do We Treat It?”

Loneliness vs Social Isolation

Social isolation is an objective state: Are you interacting regularly with other people?

Loneliness is a puzzle – it is a complicated subjective experience of distress often perceived by an individual's lack of social connection.

You can feel lonely even if you have a lot of people around you, because loneliness is about the quality of your connections.” (Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, 5/2/23 – NPR All Things Considered)

What kind of social connection are you looking for?

A friend who likes to walk or do yoga?

Someone to go to the movies with?

An individual with the same values (aka religious or political)?

A person who is understanding and a good listener?

Someone who well informed about contemporary news (local and/or global)?

A trusted other to list incase of emergency?

An individual who is a good communicator?

A friend who enjoys games, Scrabble, Bridge or Mahjong

Someone who is punctual?



What is my communication style?

- Assertive
- Aggressive
- Passive

What kind of communication style am I looking for in my social connections?

Ideal Recipe for Friendships

2 Cups of Location

4 Cups of Frequency

4 Cups of a shared Interest

Add 2 heaping tablespoons of listening to understand

Another 2 heaping tablespoons of vulnerability –share something that might come from the “If You Really Knew Me” document.

What goes through our mind when we think about asking for help?

Rare photo's of me jumping to conclusions.



Making Friends In Adulthood

- **Get Out Of The House or Invite People To Come To Your House**
- **Don't Quit Before You Start**
- **Engage With People** - Pick up the phone at least once a day to speak to a friend. Arrange to have coffee or lunch with someone at least once or twice a week.
- **Reach Out**
- **Don't Take Rejection Personally**
- **Take Things Slowly** – Give friendships time to blossom by being open, honest and showing interest in other people.

Making Friends In Adulthood

- **Pursue Your Passions – What Makes you feel alive?** Take an art course, sign up for dancing lessons or volunteer at a nonprofit. Find something that stirs your passions and places you in regular contact with the same people week after week. Friendships will follow.
- **Look For Acquaintances First** - Every friendship starts off with the exchange of a smile, question or comment. Best friends don't grow on trees and real relationships take time to nurture.
- **Try An Intergenerational Friendship** - Perhaps you have limited yourself by looking for people who are just like you. You can expand your pool of potential friends by seeking out people who are little bit different, in terms of age or lifestyle.
- **Join A Group Or Several Groups** - Become active in your community. Become a friend of the library. Participate in local government by serving on a committee. Join an existing book group (Silent Book Groups are trending) or cooking club, or start one of your own. Go to the local community center like the PNA to find out about various interest groups.

Reach for a Hand



**What can I do to
support someone?**



**What can someone do
to support me?**



**What can I do to
support and
comfort myself?**



**What connections are
available to help?**

What can I do to support others?

**What can I do to
support others?**

- 
- 1. Reach out**
 - 2. Paying attention-listen**
 - 3. Seek to understand-not judge**
 - 4. Clarify communication needs/
expectations**
 - 5. Random acts of kindness**

What can someone do to support me?

**What can
someone do to
support me?**

- 
- 1. Reach out/make plans together**
 - 2. Show me I am important**
 - 3. Listen without interrupting**
 - 4. Respect the feelings & decisions**
 - 5. Understanding of my boundaries**

What can I do to support and comfort myself?

**What can I do to
support and
comfort myself?**

- 
- 1. Walk/Stretch**
 - 2. Time with a friend**
 - 3. Healthy eating**
 - 4. Setting boundaries**
 - 5. Talk to a trusted listener or therapist**

What connections are available to help?

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help?**



My Crazy Radical Idea

Lets begin to normalize healthy inter-dependence!



I say we create an Inter-dependence Day similar to Independence Day. We could even lobby to make it a Federal Holiday that highlights random acts of kindness and spontaneous compassion!

Aging Well Formula

Everyday have:

- Something to do
- Something to look forward to
- Something to laugh at
- Something to keep you moving
- Something or someone to love
- Someone to check in with
- Something to be grateful for

Excerpts from Dori Gillam, Positive Endings



Thank You

