

Coffee with the Coach 2/14/2024

Topic: Building Connection in a Disconnected World

UNC Wellness Centers

Susan Chesser, MPH, BSN, RN, CPC



This special Valentine's Day Coffee with a Coach is all about CONNECTIONS. It is based on the US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy's report, **Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation- The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on The Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community.**

Introductions and Icebreaker:

- Introvert or extrovert?
- Text or call?
- Early bird or night owl?

Activity 1: Guide participants through a reflection exercise (Meditation on Social Connection) based on Dr Murthy's practice *see below

Discuss what loneliness is and common misconceptions ex. definitions of loneliness, isolation, solitude, social support, belonging, etc. as well as misconceptions of introverts vs. extroverts.

Impact of social connections on mental and physical health.

- Heart disease and stroke.
- Type 2 diabetes.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Addiction.
- Suicidality and self-harm.
- Dementia.
- Earlier death.

Strategies for Building Connection based on **5 FOR 5 Strategies for Connection** from Dr. Murthy's US College Tour at Duke University, Oct. 25, 2023

Step 1: Commit to connect

Pick 5 actions and 5 days in a row to connect with people in your life.

Step 2: Connect each day for 5 days

Each day, take 1 simple action of your choice to **express gratitude, offer support, or ask for help.**

Step 3: Reflect and share. Take a moment. How did connecting make you feel?

Activity 2: Kick off today! Pull out phone and text to connect right now.

Summarize key takeaways from the session.

Thank you!

***Social Connection Meditation**

This is a sixty-second meditation, adapted from Dr. Murthy's practice. This can be done during moments when we feel lonely or disconnected from others. It's a quick way to remind us that we're not alone and that even in tough times, it's possible to find something or someone to be grateful for. Here's how it goes:

Raise your right hand
and place it over your heart
and close your eyes.
Think about the people
who have loved you over the years.
The people who have been there for you
during difficult times,
who have supported you without judging you
and who stood by your side.
Even when it was hard.
Think about the people who have celebrated
your moments of greatest joy.
The people who saw your successes as theirs.
The people who derived such pleasure and fulfillment
from seeing you happy.
Feel their love flowing through you,
filling your heart,
lifting you up,
brightening your spirit.
And know that love is always there for you.
Even if they are not physically with you
because you carry that love in your heart.
Know also
that you are, and always will be, worthy of that love.
It came to you because you deserve it,
because love is your birthright.

Now open your eyes.
What you felt in that brief meditation.
That was the power of love.
and social connection.
It's who we were designed to be
and what we were designed to experience. We are all worthy of love and connection.
All of us, regardless of our age or life experience,
have the ability to remember moments,
and people, we are grateful for. We're not alone.
There are others out there who want what we want.
A life that is more connected.
A world that is more connected.
That world is within our grasp. We only have to envision it, to name it, and to start taking actions in our
day to day lives to build that world.