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In fact, many are so disconnected, Harvard Medical School



*Loneliness-"a very real and little-discussed social epidemic with frightening consequences."

3

(YouGov) 22 percent of millennials say,

- They have “no friends”
- 27% say they have “no close friends”
- 30% say they have “no best friends”
- 25% say they have no acquaintances
- 30% say they feel lonely—the highest percentage of all generations surveyed.

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John Cacioppo study of US data

- Loneliness is clearly on the rise!
- 25% of people are plagued by frequent loneliness
- AARP study: 35% of those age 45 and up report chronic loneliness. (Compared to 20% only 10 years ago)
- 29% of married people say they are lonely

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We are pretty good at knowing

- What makes us happy
- What makes us unhappy
- But not very good at predicting the intensity and duration of the effect of the events.
- We can be seriously let down after the fact.

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Prolonged loneliness can be as harmful to you as

- *smoking
- *obesity
- *high blood pressure
- *lack of exercise



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Why the rise in loneliness?

- The way we live
 - Too busy making a life to live
 - Economic pressure
 - Stranger danger—bad news travels fast + 24/7 news cycle
- Adaptive patterns from childhood
- Cyberspace versus face-to-face

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Only a few generations ago

- We spent most of our time outdoors
- Sunlight boosts serotonin
- Prevents SAD
- Regulates the body's internal clock and sleep patterns
- Today we spend 93% of our time inside.

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Technology exacerbates loneliness

- Pining away in the land of a thousand friends
- Anthropologists tell us our evolutionary structure limits us to 150 meaningful relationships at a time
- Technology hasn't changed this
- 5 intimate bonds
- 15 close friends
- 50 friends you would invite to an important event

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The virtual world

- Affordable
- Accessible
- Anonymous
- Addictive

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Internet has created an additional way to cheat in business and bragging

- Devumi
- Has collected millions of dollars from the global marketplace
- By selling followers and retweets to:
 - Celebrities
 - Businesses
 - Politicians
 - Anyone who wants to appear more popular

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Jean Twenge, Ph.D. professor of Psychology
San Diego State University

- *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable Than Ever Before*
- *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement*
- *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy -- and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (August 22, 2017)

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iGen: born between 1995 and 2012

- They have more leisure time (less homework, fewer have jobs)
- More time on social media
- Time with friends has dropped 40% between 2000 and 2015
- On the brink of the worst mental-health crisis in decades.
- Direct link to phone use
- Teens with more time than average on screen are more unhappy
- Teens with more time than average on nonscreen activities happier
- All screen activities are linked to less happiness; all nonscreen activities linking to more happiness (even homework)

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iGen data

- Lonely
- Dislocated
- Depressed—heavy users of social media increase depression 27%
- Sports, religious services, volunteer work, hobbies—increase happiness; prevent depression
- Teens who spend 3 hrs a day or more on electronic devices are 35% more likely to have a risk factor for suicide, such as making a plan.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- In 1999 the death rate for children 10-14 from car crashes was quadruple the rate for suicide.
- In 2014 car crashes went down by 58%, but suicide rates were doubled.
- Social media magnifies challenges and insecurities of preteens.
- **If something gets said that is hurtful or humiliating, it's not just the child who said it who knows, it is the entire school or class!**

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iGen date continued

- Social media exacerbates concern of being left out
- Especially hard on girls
- Boys' depressive symptoms increased 21% from 2012 to 2015
- Girls' depressive symptoms increased by 50%!
- Rise in suicide in girls is pronounced.

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Dire consequences

- Girls are more likely to experience cyberbullying
- Boys tend to bully each other in person
- Girls undermine other girls social status
- Middle and high-school girls:
 - Ostracize
 - Exclude
 - Send hateful messages
 - Death threats
 - Spread lies
 - Pose as the victims and harass others in their names
 - Post humiliating videos of kids they dislike

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Cyberbullying—The mean way kids treat each other online

- 20% of teens say their peers are mostly unkind to each other on social networks.
- 24% of teens, young adults say someone has written something about them online that wasn't true.
- 9% say someone has threatened to use electronic communication to tell others private things about them as a form of blackmail.

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What do we mean by connection?

- A deep and enduring emotional bond that transcends time and space,
- AKA: attachment



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What makes attachment difficult?

- We are wired to connect, but also...
- wired to protect!



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Protection is a healthy drive



22

Except when it is not...



23

Trapped like a rat...



24

Party rat



25

Think of someone who made you feel loved, important, competent or confident.



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Heuristic approach to helping

- heu·ris·tic
- hyōō'ristik/
- adjective: **heuristic**
- 1. enabling a person to discover or learn something for themselves. "a hands-on approach to learning"

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Heuristic Question #1



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Heuristic question #2



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Heuristic question #3



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Are in in the game of life?



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Heuristic question #4



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Heuristic question #5



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Wire yourself for connection...