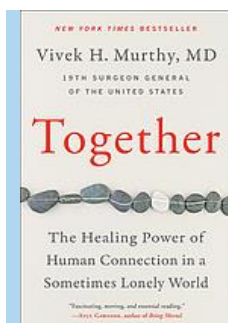


Discussion Guide



Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World
Vivek H. Murthy, M.D.

HarperCollins
2021
352 pages
ISBN: 978-0062913302

Loneliness and Isolation

Summary

Humans are social creatures: In this simple and obvious fact lies both the problem and the solution to the current crisis of loneliness. In his groundbreaking book, Dr. Vivek Murthy makes a case for loneliness as a public health concern: a root cause and contributor to many of the epidemics sweeping the world today. Loneliness, he argues, is affecting not only our health, but also that of our children.

But, at the center of our loneliness is our innate desire to connect. We have evolved to participate in community, to forge lasting bonds with others, to help one another, and to share life experiences. We are, simply, better together. (Adapted from the [publisher](#))

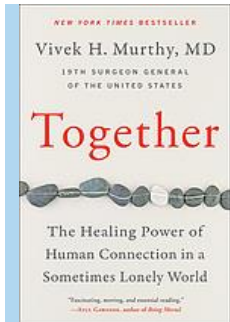
Questions

1. Some of Dr. Murthy's patients have shared that they don't have anyone who they can authentically talk to or feel seen by in their life. As one of Dr. Murthy's friends put it, "To be loved is not enough. You have to both be loved and to be known." Do you feel known?
2. Loneliness is both common and consequential. It's an epidemic that, according to surveys, affects around 20% of adults in the United States and impacts our health outcomes, work engagement, and school performance. Does this number surprise you? Does this number compel you?
3. There are a number of reasons why loneliness—which has always been a struggle—is so ubiquitous now. We're more mobile, for starters. And we also have more technology that can dilute or substitute higher-quality interactions. To what do you attribute the loneliness epidemic? How has mobility, technology, or something else impacted your ability to make durable connections?
4. What cultural stigmas have you noticed around the topic of loneliness? How do you think your race, gender, or age has affected your ability to talk truthfully about it?
5. Dr. Murthy's physical therapist once said to him, "Strength is the padding that you need in life. It makes you less susceptible to injury." What's one relationship in your life right now that gives you strength? How has it been a cushion against pain? How can you be a cushion for someone else?

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6. The great irony is that the thing that affords us the greatest ability to connect—our fragility—is the thing we’re most afraid to share. What’s something small that helps you overcome this fear when you’re struggling to connect?
7. To address the loneliness epidemic, Dr. Murthy says we will have to ask deeper questions about life, its purpose, and our obligation to one another. What question do you think is part of the solution?