

**BEYOND LONELINESS:  
BUILDING FRIENDSHIP,  
SOCIAL SUPPORT,  
AND COMMUNITY**

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**LONELINESS**

**KILLS**

- Few friends, combined with loneliness linked to poor mental and physical health

*HighbeamResearch.com, April 2009*

- Loneliness increases dementia risk.

*Journal of Chinese Medicine, June 2007*

- Why loneliness is bad for your health

*Jet, August 2000*

## **OUR 3 SELF CLUSTERS**

- Personal (intimate) Self
- Social (relational) Self
- Collective Self

Gardner & Brewer  
*Journal of Personality & Psychology*  
1996

- Loneliness makes us less socially adept - lonely people have the same skills, but don't use theirs.
- Loneliness is not just about being alone - it is about feeling isolated.
- It is not about quantity, but quality - makes no difference if you have 4000 FaceBook friends - it only takes 2 or 3 people to help us feel connected.
- Social isolation is on par with high blood pressure, obesity, lack of exercise or **SMOKING** is a risk factor for illness or death.

*(Science, Fall 1988)*

- In adults, the release of oxytocin triggered by sucking may contribute to the addictive quality of smoking - as well as to immediate intimacy often shown by smokers who may have nothing else in common. People rarely feel lonely while smoking in a group.
- Amphetamine administered to male rhesus monkeys had an inverse relationship based on social rank. It increased **dominant** behavior in high social order males and increased **submissive** behavior in low-ranking males.

- Loneliness deprives us of touch and the soothing comfort it brings. Unwanted isolation in any form (physical, emotional, spiritual) is deeply disruptive to an organism designed by nature to function in a social setting.
- When we are lonely, we feel less of the uplifts that most people feel simply from seeing others in happy circumstances.
- Feelings of isolation engender depression and hostility and impair self-regulation.
- Feelings of social isolation deprive us of vast reservoirs of creativity and energy. Connection adds more water to the well that nourishes our human potential.

*Loneliness: Human Nature & the Need for Social Connection*

John Cacioppo & Williams Patrick

W.W. Norton Company

2008

## CONNECTION & FRIENDSHIP ARE THE ROADS TO OUR PERSONAL SALVATION

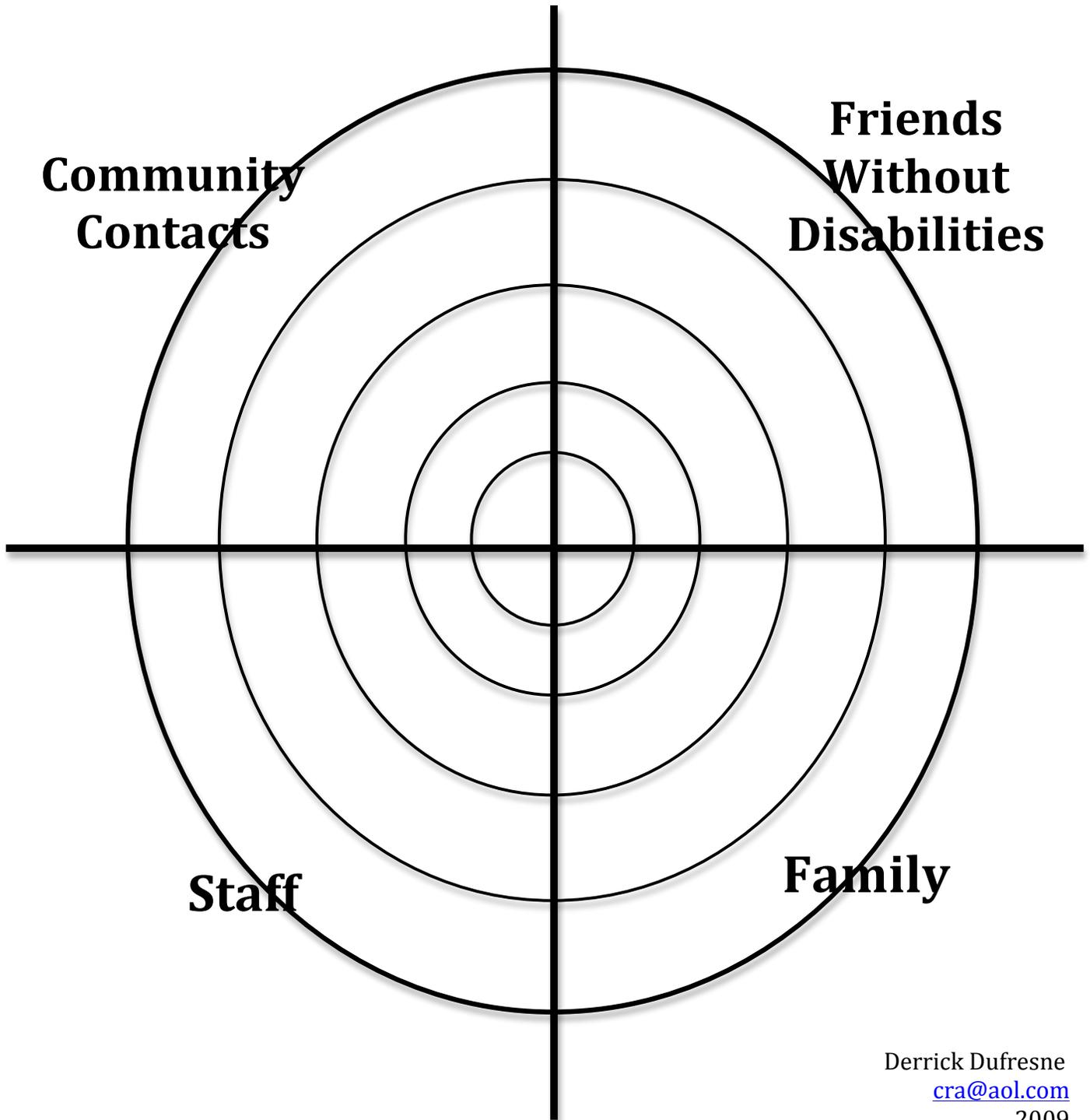
- We need touch, laughter, and meaning
  - Live
  - Work
  - Play
  - Love
  - Worship (gathering)
- We are separated from animals not by behavior or needs, but that we seek meaning.
- The greatest disabilities are poverty and loneliness.
- Many adults with disabilities have poor social skills and no money - thus, the greatest disabilities are poverty and loneliness.
- Social skills are discrete, teachable, and replicable skills.
- Only staff with good social skills should work with people with poor social skills.
- Don't use my stuff to fill your holes! (Lynne Seagle)

- The world works on connections.
- The number one reason people with disabilities keep/lose their jobs is lack of social skills and inability to get along with their co-workers.
- People get jobs overwhelmingly not because of skills but connections.
- Stuart Smalley from SNL was right.
- It may take a thousand connections to make one friend if you only meet 2 new people a week. This could take 10 years.

## SO WHAT DO WE DO?

- Change the definition of success. We no longer see it as innovative, exciting or noteworthy to talk about staff taking people into the community.
- **Understand Clients are *in* the Community; Citizens are *of* the Community.**
- Success is now measured not by the places we go, but the people we know.
- The goal is not to make people friends, but increase opportunities and connections.
- Develop a relationship map (see attached).
- Find the person and the wish.
- Test the hypothesis (see attachment).
- Repeat until successful.

# RELATIONSHIP MAP



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