



SUCCESSFUL THINKING NEWSLETTER

DJC



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Social Connectedness and Social Thinking

Welcome to the June Edition of the DJC Successful Thinking Newsletter

This month, we delve into a theme that touches the core of our personal and professional lives: "Social Connectedness and Social Thinking." At a time when the world feels increasingly digital, understanding and fostering genuine human connections can significantly enhance our interactions and leadership, no matter our position or role.

In our fast-paced, technology-driven environment, the value of face-to-face interactions and empathetic connections cannot be overstated. Whether you're stepping into a conference room, participating in a community event, or simply interacting with colleagues online, the ability to connect socially and think about relationships critically is crucial for nurturing productive and compassionate environments.

This issue features an in-depth look at the importance of social connectedness, exploring how it impacts our wellbeing and success. Additionally, we offer a practical monthly activity that encourages you to apply these concepts in your everyday life, helping to bridge the gap between understanding and practice.

Join us as we explore how enhancing our social thinking can lead to more meaningful and effective interactions, laying the groundwork for a more connected and empathetic world. Let's discover together how strengthening our social bonds can transform the way we work, lead, and relate.

The Power of Connection: Harnessing Social Connectedness for Personal and Professional Success

In the fast-paced, technology-driven world of today, our lives are increasingly mediated by screens. We negotiate our professional tasks, manage personal relationships, and even forge new social connections through digital interfaces. While these tools offer unprecedented convenience and reach, they also pose significant challenges to the fundamental human experience of genuine connection. Drawing on the insights of Matthew Lieberman, a pioneering neuroscientist and author of "Social," we understand that our brains are inherently designed to connect with others. This need for social connectedness is as critical to our well-being as food and shelter.

Lieberman's research is part of a growing body of work that underscores the importance of interpersonal connections. Social neuroscientists like him have shown that our brains are remarkably social. The dorsal anterior cingulate cortex, for example, is an area that lights up not just during physical pain but also during social pain, such as experiencing rejection. This overlap suggests that social connection is not just a cultural phenomenon but a biological imperative.

Insights from Other Thought Leaders

Brené Brown, a research professor and best-selling author, emphasizes vulnerability as a core aspect of forming deep, meaningful connections. In her talks and writings, Brown discusses how vulnerability is not about weakness but about the courage to show up and be seen, to share our true selves. She argues that vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is clear, then, that to form authentic connections, we must be willing to be truly seen, warts and all.

Daniel Goleman, known for his work on emotional intelligence, adds another layer to our understanding of social connectivity. He points out that our emotional and social skills are crucial for effective interpersonal relations and professional success. Goleman's research highlights how empathy and social skills enable people to influence and inspire others, navigate social complexities, and build supportive networks that are crucial for long-term success.

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Susan Pinker, a psychologist and author of "The Village Effect," explores how face-to-face contact can make us healthier, smarter, and happier. Pinker's studies show that direct interactions with others not only affect our learning processes but also our longevity. Her findings support the idea that while technology can simulate connectivity, the human element inherent in personal interactions has irreplaceable benefits.

The Social Brain: Why Connections Matter

Matthew Lieberman's groundbreaking research reveals how intricately our brains are engineered for connection. He shows that the need for social interaction is not merely a behavioral preference but is deeply embedded in our neurology. For example, when we encounter social pain—such as rejection or loneliness—our brain triggers the same neural responses as it does for physical pain. This neurological overlap is a powerful testament to the essential role that social bonds play in our overall mental and physical health.

Lieberman's work is supported by insights from other leading thinkers who emphasize various aspects of how social connections influence our lives. Brené Brown, a prominent voice on vulnerability, argues that authentic connections are forged when we allow ourselves to be truly seen. Her research underlines that vulnerability is not a sign of weakness but a courageous act of opening oneself to others, creating deeper, more meaningful relationships.

Daniel Goleman, renowned for his research on emotional intelligence, further enhances our understanding of the social brain. He identifies emotional and social skills as critical for effective personal and professional relationships. According to Goleman, skills such as empathy and social awareness are indispensable for influencing and inspiring others, navigating complex social situations, and building supportive networks—capabilities crucial for long-term success.

Adding another dimension to this discussion, psychologist Susan Pinker explores the tangible benefits of direct human contact in her book, "The Village Effect." She

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presents compelling evidence that face-to-face interactions don't just enrich our learning experiences but are also critical to our longevity. Pinker's research supports the notion that while digital tools can offer the illusion of connectivity, nothing replaces the profound biological and psychological benefits of in-person interactions.

Social Connections as a Path to Personal and Professional Fulfillment

Building on these insights, imagine the possibilities if we prioritized building social connections as fervently as we chase professional accolades or individual achievements. Lieberman's findings suggest that nurturing our social networks and investing in relationships could unlock higher levels of happiness and professional success. By prioritizing these relationships, we tap into the full potential of our social brain, engaging skills like empathy, understanding, and cooperation. These are not just beneficial for personal interactions but are also invaluable in professional settings.

This collective wisdom from Lieberman, Brown, Goleman, and Pinker paints a comprehensive picture of how crucial social connectivity is. It not only enhances individual well-being and community health but also acts as a cornerstone for building resilient, effective, and compassionate professional environments. As we continue to navigate a technology-driven world, these insights urge us to reconsider the balance between our online interactions and the irreplaceable power of human touch.

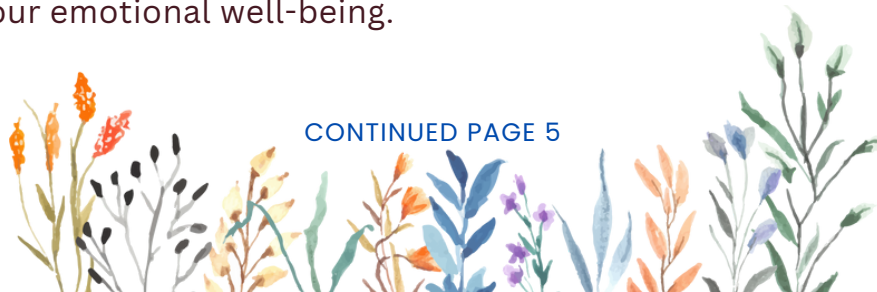
Applying Social Connectivity for Personal and Professional Success

Embracing the insights into social connectivity can transform both your personal life and professional career in profound ways. Here's how you can integrate these principles to foster deeper connections and achieve greater fulfillment.

For Personal Success:

Prioritize Quality Time: Make it a point to spend quality time with family and friends. This doesn't necessarily mean grand gestures; even simple, everyday interactions can strengthen bonds. Whether it's a shared meal, a walk in the park, or a regular phone call, these moments are crucial for nurturing relationships and enhancing your emotional well-being.

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Cultivate Vulnerability: Inspired by Brené Brown’s advocacy for vulnerability, try opening up more to those around you. Sharing your thoughts, challenges, and feelings can seem daunting, but it invites others to connect with you on a deeper level. This doesn’t mean over-sharing but rather being honest about your emotions and experiences. It builds trust and fosters genuine connections that are supportive and enriching.

Engage in Community Activities: Participate in local community events or volunteer for causes you care about. These activities are not only fulfilling but also excellent opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals. They can expand your social circle and provide a sense of belonging and purpose.

For Professional Success:

Enhance Your Emotional Intelligence: As highlighted by Daniel Goleman, emotional intelligence is crucial in the workplace. Work on your empathy, social skills, and self-awareness. These traits allow you to better understand your colleagues and superiors, leading to more effective communication and teamwork. Consider training sessions or workshops that focus on these skills.

Foster a Collaborative Environment: Create opportunities for your team to connect beyond work-related tasks. This could be through team-building activities, regular in-person meetings (if possible), or social outings. A connected team is more engaged, communicative, and productive, which can dramatically improve workplace atmosphere and output.

Practice Active Listening: Active listening involves fully concentrating on the speaker, understanding their message, responding thoughtfully, and remembering the discussion. This skill is essential for effective leadership and helps in building respect and trust among colleagues.

Integrating Connectivity

To truly benefit from these strategies, try to integrate them into your daily routines gradually. Set realistic goals for yourself, perhaps starting with one personal and one professional strategy. Keep a journal or log to track your progress and reflect on how these changes affect your interactions and overall well-being.

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Caring for the social aspects of your life shows a commitment not just to personal and professional growth but also to leading a balanced, fulfilling life. By valuing and actively enhancing your social connections, you'll find that you are not only more successful but also happier and more content.

Embracing Connection for a Richer Life

In a world where technology continually reshapes our interactions, the timeless value of genuine human connection remains unchanged. As we have explored through the insights of Matthew Lieberman, Brené Brown, Daniel Goleman, and Susan Pinker, nurturing our social connections enriches our lives in myriad ways, offering a wellspring of personal satisfaction and professional success.

Embracing social connectivity doesn't merely enhance our own lives; it also contributes to a more compassionate, understanding, and cooperative society. It encourages us to look beyond our screens and engage with the world and people around us in more meaningful ways. Whether through strengthening family ties, building professional networks, or engaging in community service, the effort to connect is an investment in our collective future.

As we continue on our paths, may we strive to integrate the principles of social thinking into our daily routines and interactions. Let's commit to being architects of a community where everyone feels understood, appreciated, and connected. Remember, in the pursuit of success and fulfillment, our relationships are not just the journey but also the destination. Here's to a future where we cherish and cultivate our connections, knowing that they are key to our true happiness and achievement.

**"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship."
- Brené Brown**



June Reader Activity

Connection Circles: Strengthening Your Social Networks

Our June activity will help you actively enhance your social connectedness and deepen your relationships, both personally and professionally, by mapping and engaging your social networks in a thoughtful and structured way.

This activity is designed to make you more aware of the state of your social connections and to encourage proactive efforts in nurturing and deepening these relationships. By intentionally focusing on how you interact with others, you'll not only enhance your own social well-being but also contribute positively to the lives of those around you. As you engage with this exercise, remember that every strong relationship is built on consistent, caring interactions over time.

Here's what you will do:

1. Map Your Current Social Network:

- Draw a circle in the middle of your page, and write your name in it.
- Draw several circles around your central circle. Label these with the names of people you interact with regularly across different areas of your life (family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances).
- Connect these circles with lines to your name and to each other where relationships exist.

2. Assess the Strength of Connections:

- Review each connection and mark them with symbols based on their strength: a solid line for strong relationships, a dashed line for relationships that could be improved, and a dotted line for weak relationships.
- Reflect on what makes some relationships stronger than others and what might be lacking in weaker relationships.

3. Set Goals for Each Relationship Type:

- Identify at least one relationship you'd like to strengthen in the coming month. Set a specific, measurable goal for improving this connection. For example, "Have a weekly catch-up call with [person's name]" or "Arrange a coffee meeting with [colleague's name]."

4. Engage More Deeply:

- Plan specific actions to engage more deeply with the people in your network. This could involve reaching out to reconnect, offering help on a project, or simply sharing something you both enjoy.
- Be mindful to listen actively and empathetically during your interactions, focusing on understanding and responding to the other person's thoughts and feelings without judgment.

5. Reflect and Adjust:

- At the end of the month, revisit your map and reflect on any changes in your relationships. Note any improvements or further areas for development.
- Adjust your approach if necessary, setting new goals for the next month.



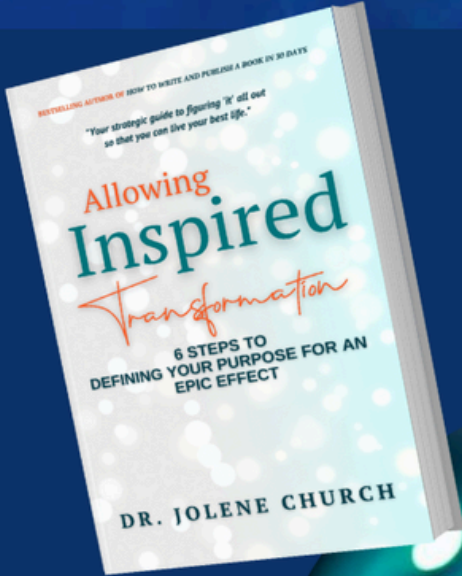
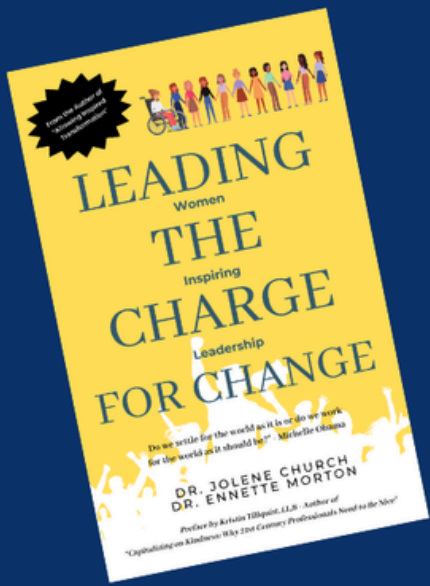


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