

# Roadmap to Resiliency:

Medical perspectives and strategies for managing distress



Arash Asher, MD  
Director, Cancer Survivorship and Rehabilitation  
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**CEDARS-SINAI**

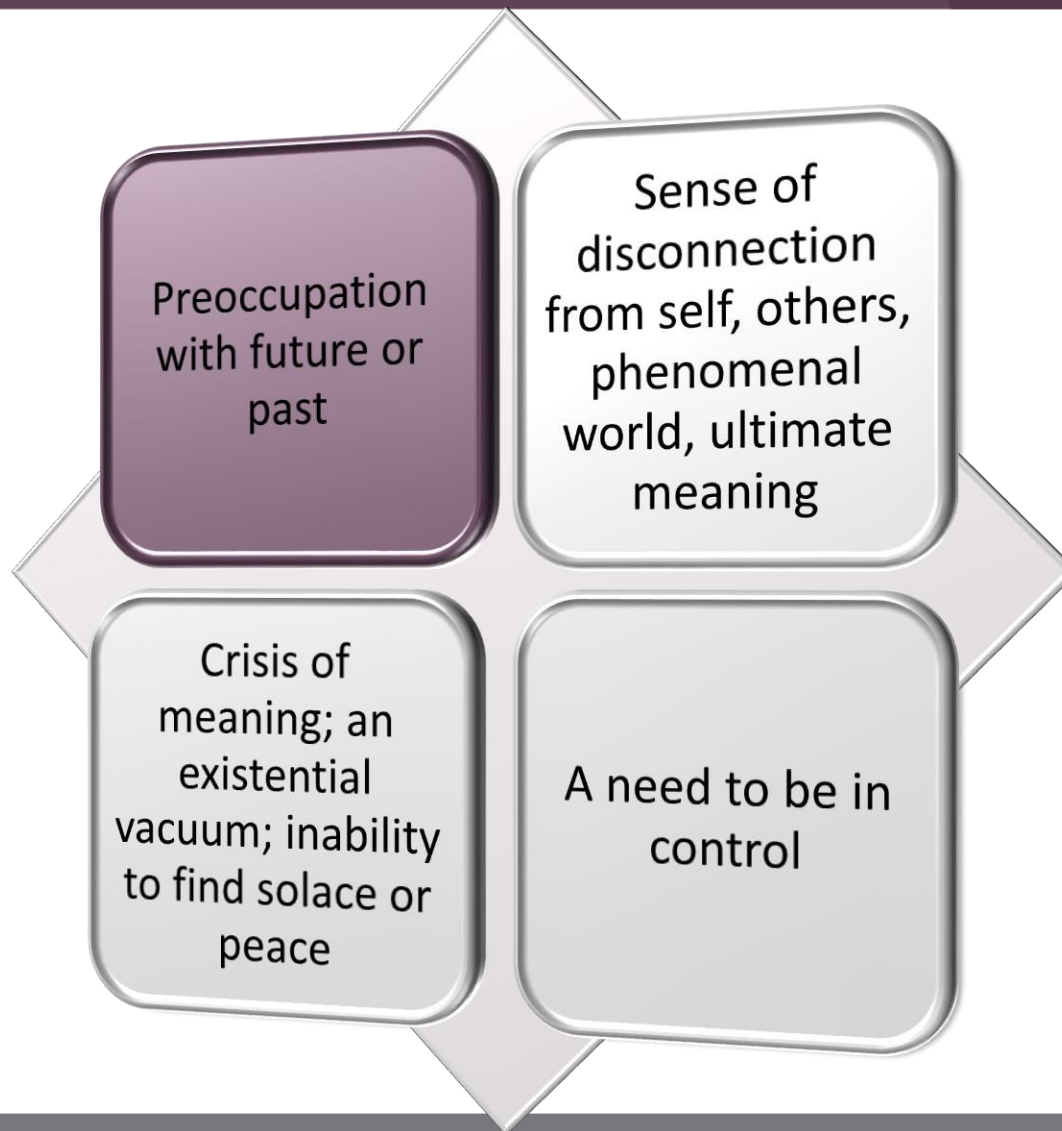
LEADING THE QUEST

[cedars-sinai.edu](http://cedars-sinai.edu)

- What does it mean to be healthy?
- What does it mean to be whole?
- What does it mean to be resilient?



# Suffering/Anguish



# GRACE Program Overview

- Week 1: **Insight & Wisdom**
- Week 2: **Hope & Gratitude**
- Week 3: **Purpose & Meaning**
- Week 4: **Connectivity & Humor**
- Week 5: **Strength & Courage**
- Week 6: **Perseverance & Blessings**



# Meaning & Purpose

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# Guinness (March 11, 2016): Holocaust survivor, 112, named world's oldest man



“I don’t know the secret for long life. I believe that everything is determined from above and we shall never know the reasons why. There have been smarter, stronger and better looking men than me who are no longer alive. All that is left for us to do is to keep on working as hard as we can and rebuild what is lost.”

Mr Israel Kristal



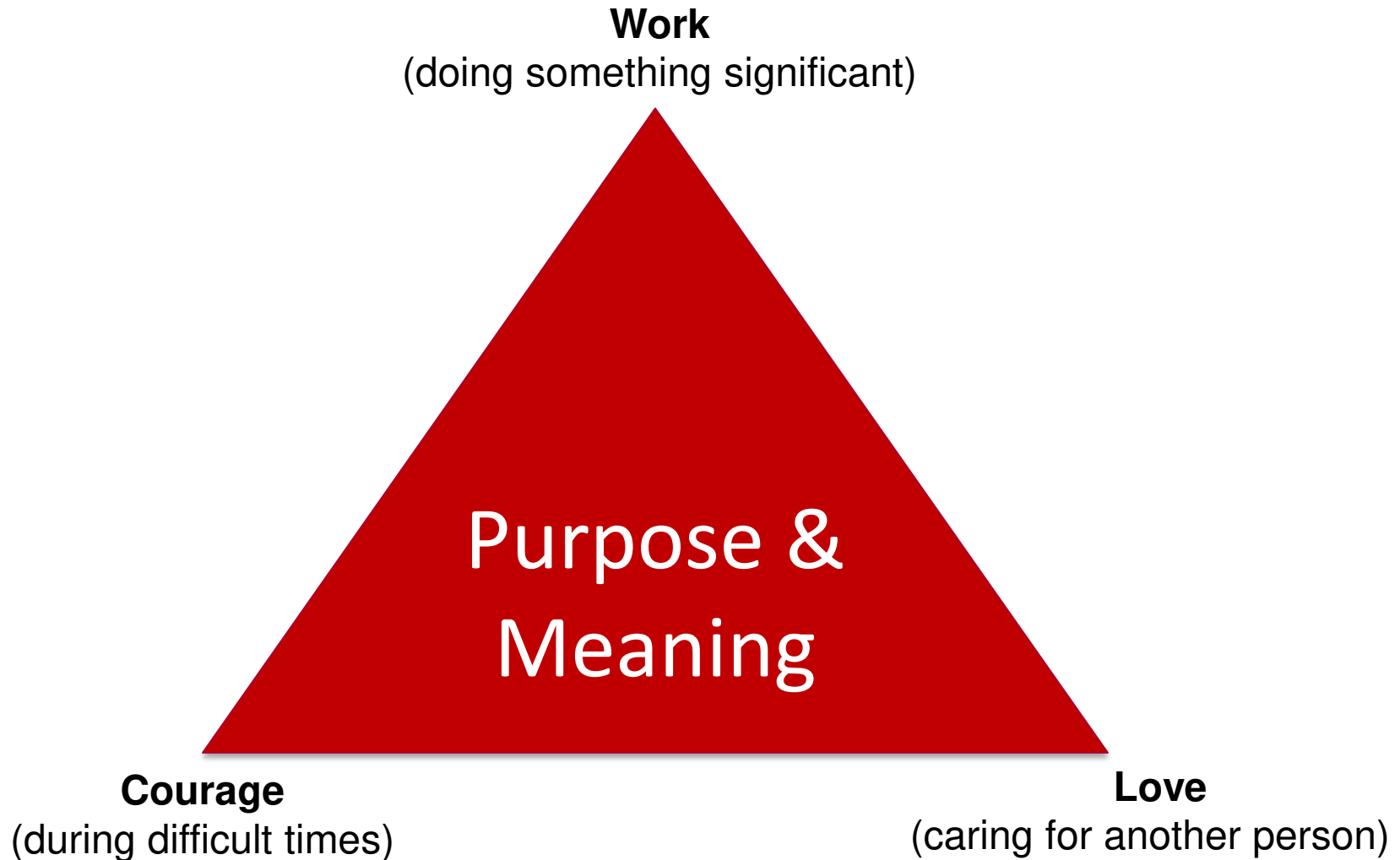


# Viktor E. Frankl

- 1905 – 1997
- Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust Survivor
- Between 1942 and 1945 Frankl imprisoned in 4 different camps, including Auschwitz
- His mother, father, brother, and pregnant wife were imprisoned and all but Frankl perished

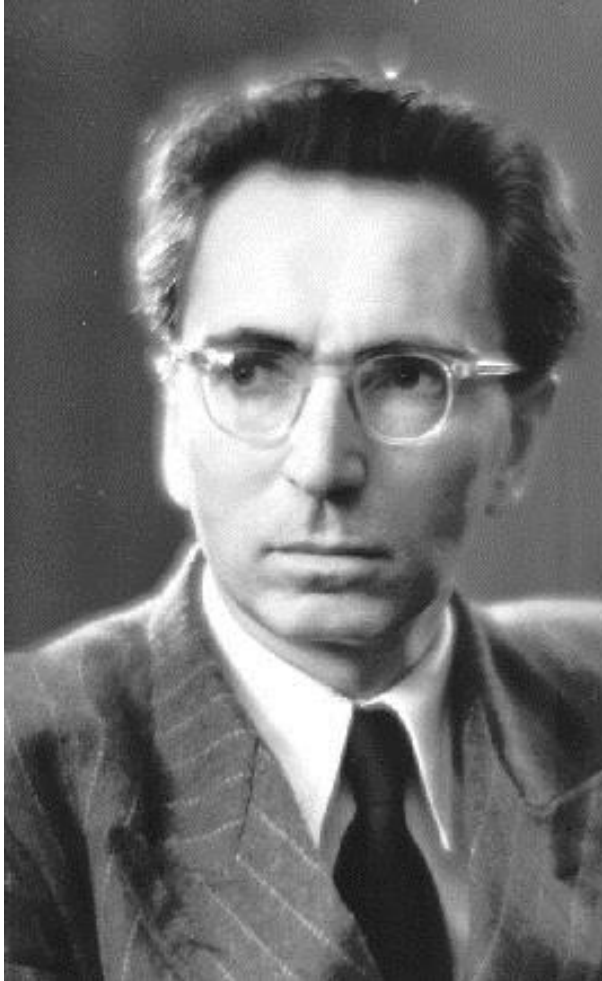


# Frankl's Sources for Finding Meaning and Purpose





# Viktor Frankl



*"When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves."*

*Viktor E. Frankl*



# Why Does Purpose in Life Matter?

- Ten studies with a total of 136,265 participants
- Significant association with a higher purpose in life and:
  1. Reduced all-cause mortality (relative risk 0.83)
  2. Reduced cardiovascular events (relative risk 0.83)

# Mastering Perspective

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# What is Mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is the process of developing **self-awareness**
- Helps put us in charge of our minds instead of letting our minds be in charge of us
- Learning to differentiate thoughts and feelings from reality
- Learning to center your attention on the present moment



Adapted from Emily Berg



# Managing Attitude

“We who lived, in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: **the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.**”

Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*



# The Space Between

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

– unknown

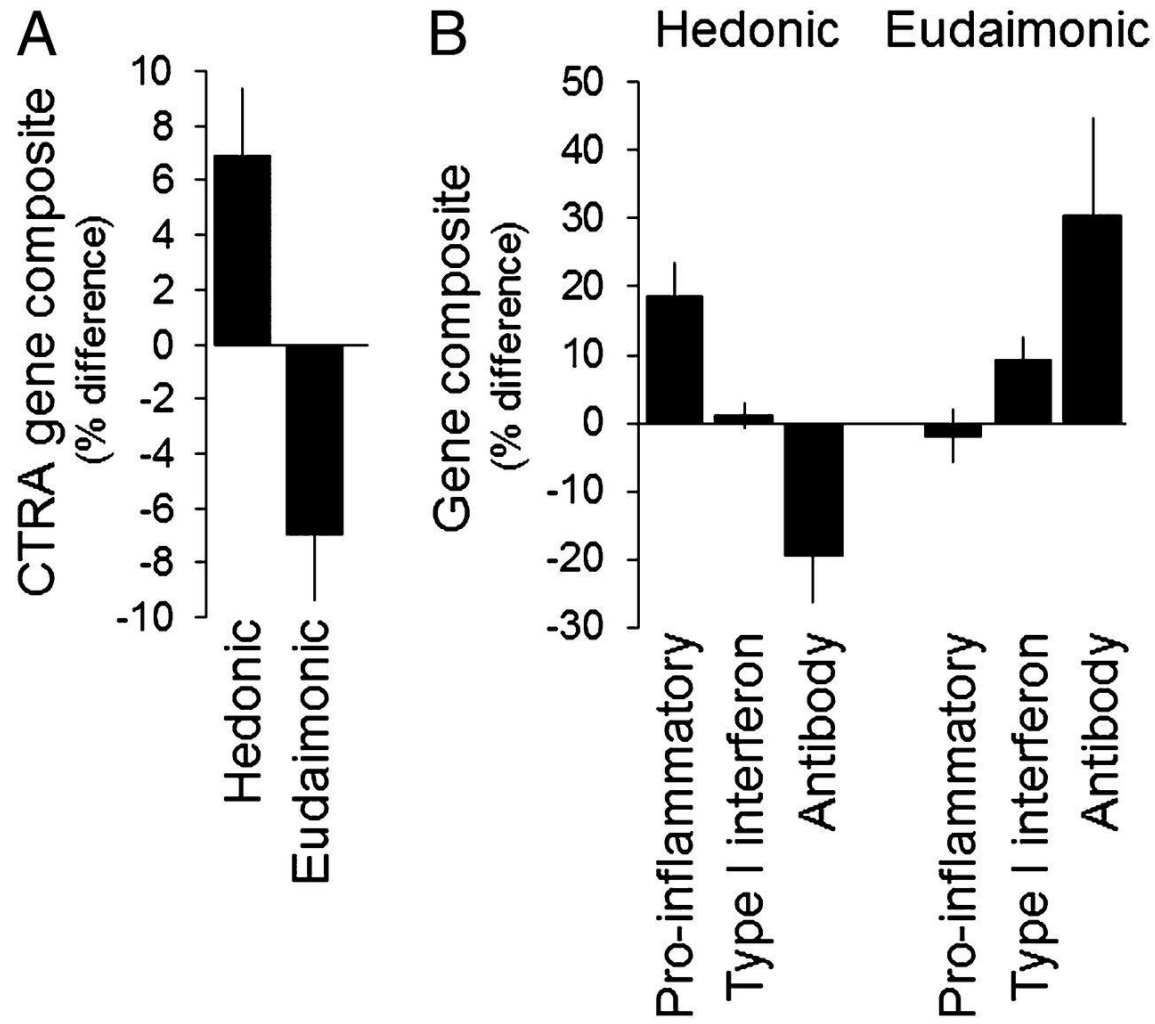




# Hedonic vs. Eudaimonic



# Expression of the CTRA gene (Gene Involved with ADVERSITY): Both groups selected for HIGH Levels of WELL-BEING



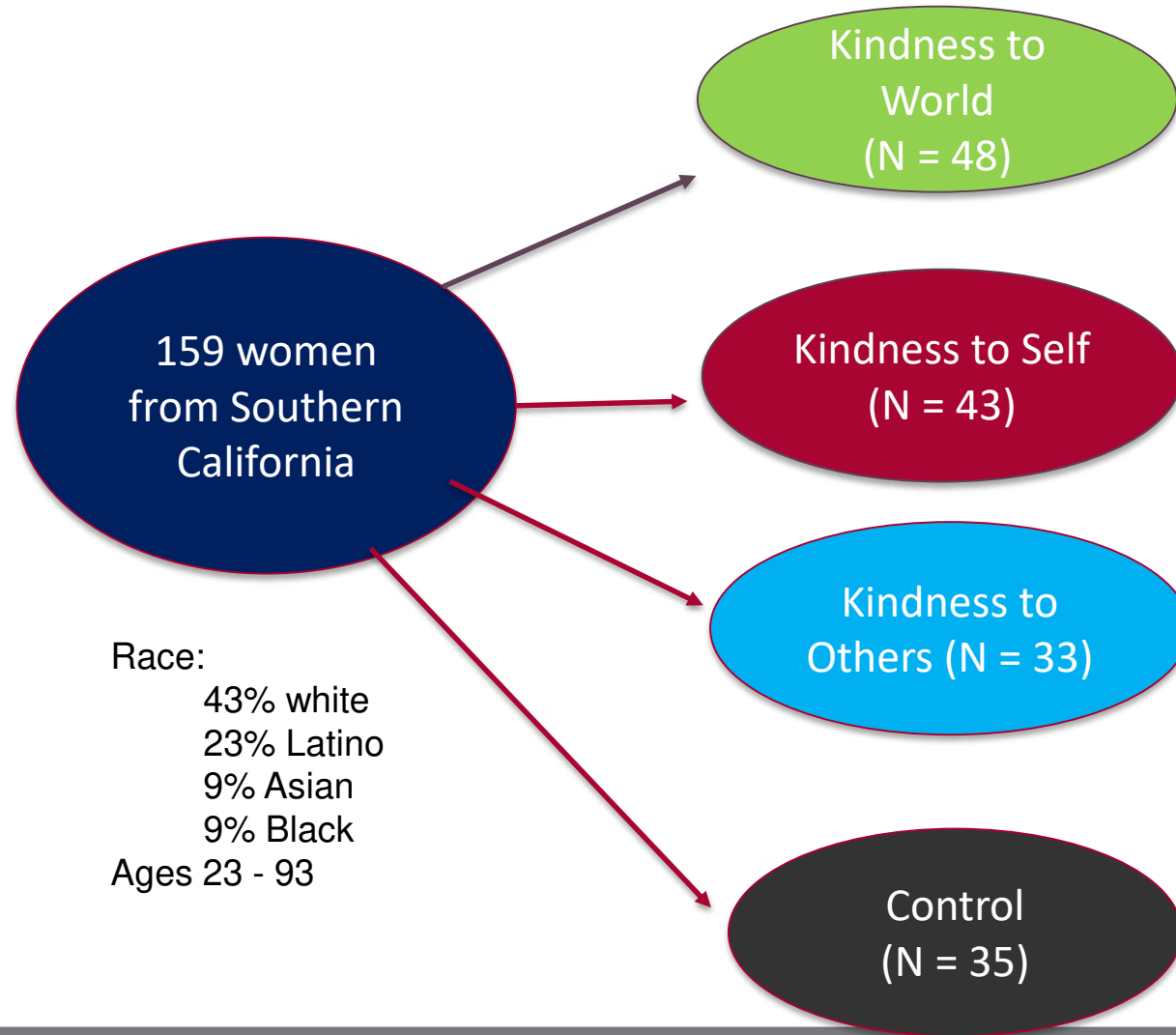
Barbara L. Fredrickson et al. PNAS 2013;110:13684-13689

What does life expect from me?

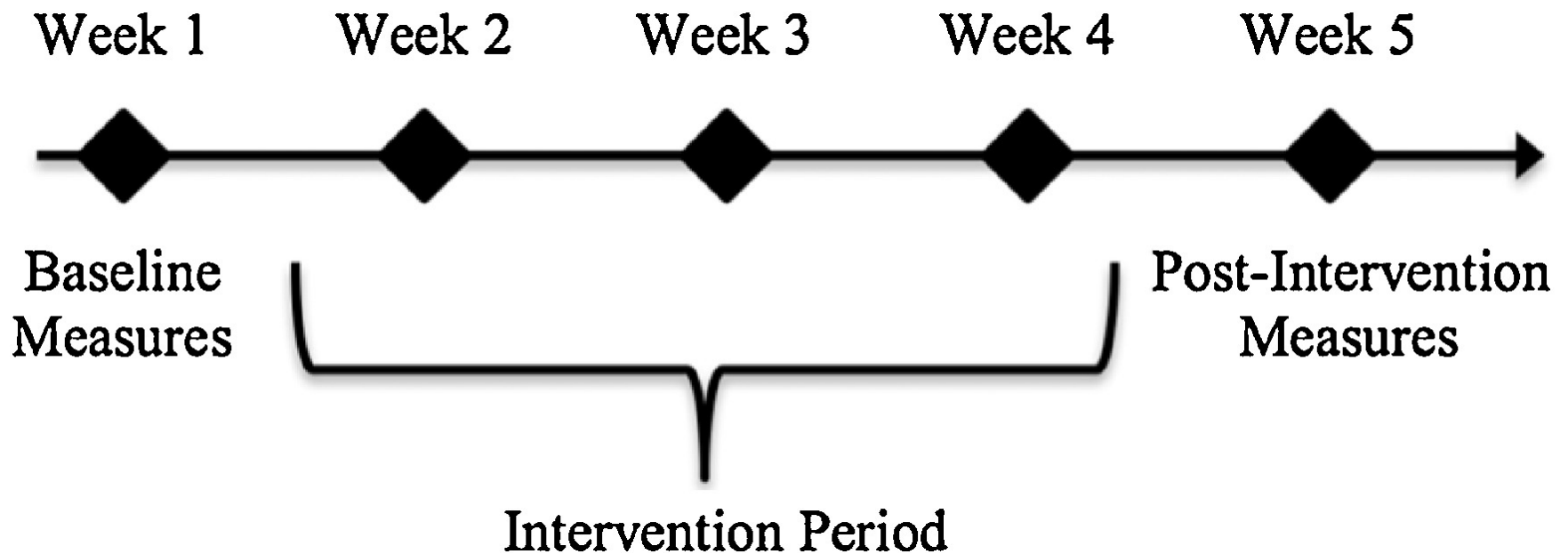
(Rather than what do I expect from life?)



# Kindness in the Blood Study



# Kindness in the Blood Study



# Kindness to Others

In our daily lives, we all perform acts of kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness—both large and small—for others. Examples include cooking dinner for friends or family, doing a chore for a family member, paying for someone’s coffee in line behind you, visiting an elderly relative, or writing a thank you letter. *Tomorrow*, you are to perform *three* nice things for others, all three in one day. These acts of kindness do not need to be for the same person, the person may or may not be aware of the act, and the act may or may not be similar to the acts listed above. Next week, you will report what nice things you chose to perform. Please do not perform any kind acts that may place yourself or others in danger.

“Gave some berry cobbler to a neighbor”

“Washed dishes for mom”

“Made my significant other their favorite meal”





# Kindness to World

- In our daily lives, we all perform acts of kindness—both large and small—to make the world a better place. Examples include recycling, picking up roadside litter, donating to charity, or volunteering for a local organization. *Tomorrow*, you are to perform *three* nice things to improve the world, all three in one day. These acts of kindness do not necessarily need to involve other people, but they should be efforts to contribute to the world or humanity at large. In addition, the act may or may not be similar to the acts listed above. Next week, you will report what nice things you chose to perform. Please do not perform any kind acts that may place yourself or others in danger.

- “Donated money to Plant Discovery Day”
- “Volunteered to clean up after a philosophy department event”
- “Gave things to Good Will”

# Kindness to Self

In our daily lives, we all perform acts of kindness for others, but we often neglect to do nice things for ourselves. *Tomorrow*, you are to perform *three* acts of kindness *for yourself*, all three in one day. These nice things that you do for yourself could be large (e.g., enjoying a day trip to your favorite hiking spot or a day at the spa) or they could be small (e.g., taking a 5-minute break when feeling stressed), but they should be something out of the ordinary that you do for yourself with a little extra effort. Examples include having your favorite meal, treating yourself to a massage, or spending time on your favorite hobby. These nice things for yourself do not need to be the same as the examples listed above, and although they may involve other people, they should be things that you do explicitly for yourself, not others.

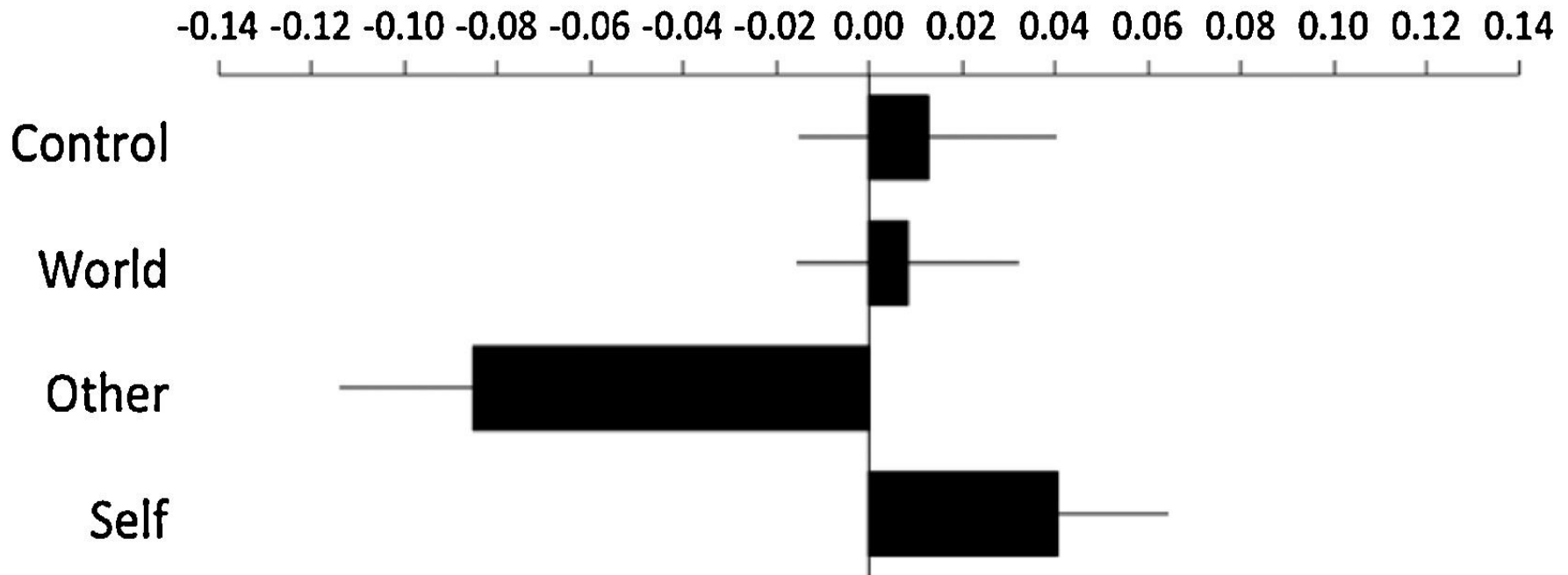
- “Splurged on a Thai coffee in the middle of the day”
- “Went to the beach”
- “Left work early”

# Control

- *Tomorrow*, as you go about your day, please keep track of your activities. You do not need to remember who you are with or how you are feeling during that time. Instead, just try to remember factual information about what you are doing. Do not alter your routine in any way; simply keep track of what you do. When you log back in to the study, you will be asked to write an outline of what you did. For example: Morning: Ate breakfast, went to work, ate lunch with coworkers. Afternoon: Started a new project, held a meeting, went to the gym. Evening: Ate dinner, watched TV, went to bed. Only the facts are important.
- “Worked each day from 7:30am – 4:30pm. Walked this week either on my breaks or lunch. Had several meetings and completed my work via computer, in person, mail. At home, I spent a great deal of time with my family, cleaned my house, cooked and watched tv. also went shopping in the local mall, grocery store, major warehouse store. I also spent time alone reading and listening to music.”

# Kindness in the Blood Study

## Change in CTRA gene expression: Week 5 – Week 1



# Creating a Legacy

“A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in.”

— Greek proverb



Where do you think it's best to plant a young tree:  
a clearing in an old-growth forest or an open field?

# Defining a Legacy

- Legacy is about **life and living**
- It is fundamental to what is to be human
- Research shows that without a sense of working to create a legacy, adults lose meaning in their life
- The idea of legacy may remind us about death, but it is not about death. It is about reminding us of what's most important to us
- Legacy helps decide the kind of life we want to live and the kind of world we want to live in

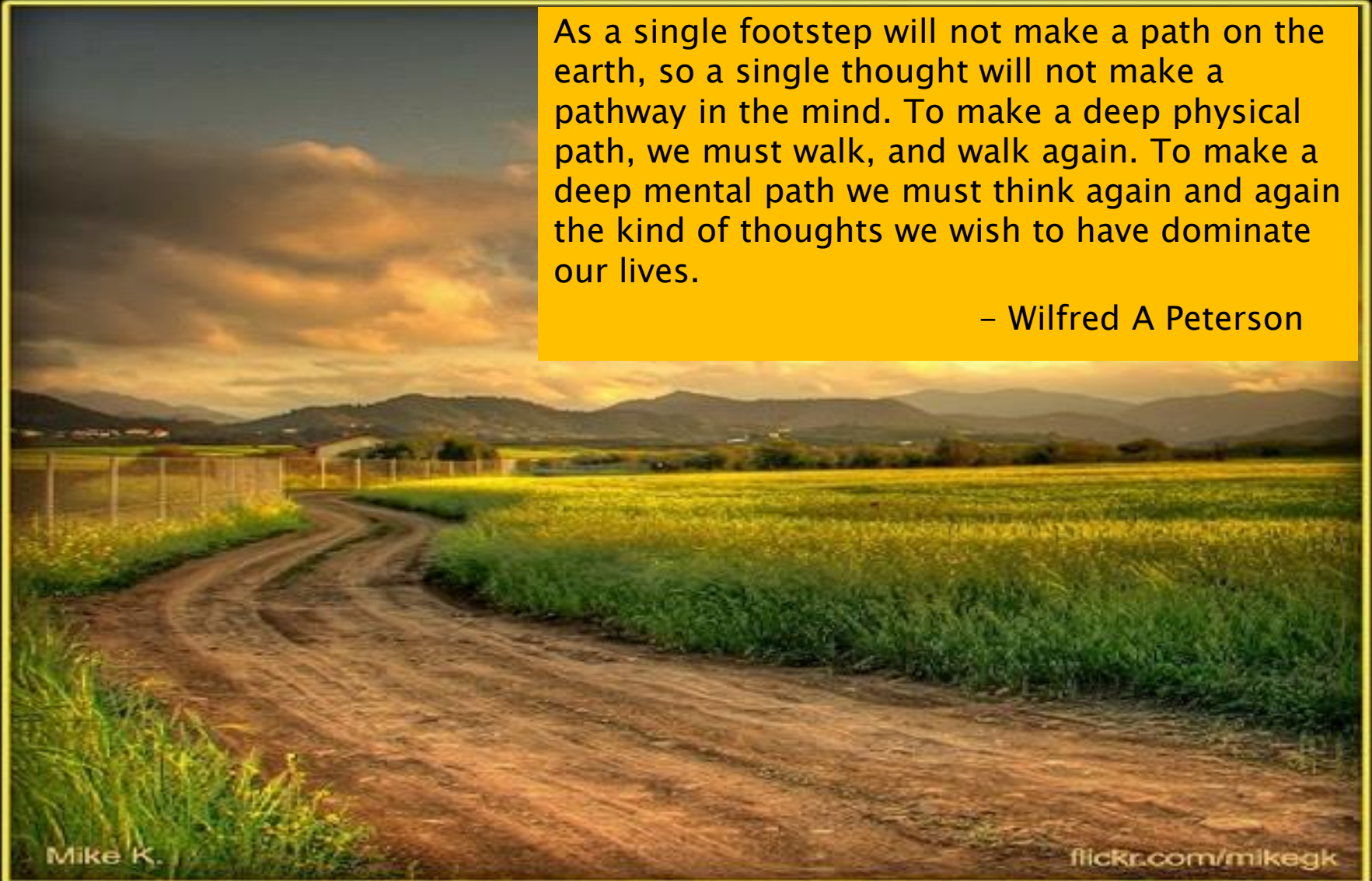




# Pathways of Thought

As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we must walk, and walk again. To make a deep mental path we must think again and again the kind of thoughts we wish to have dominate our lives.

– Wilfred A Peterson



Mike K.

[flickr.com/mikegk](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mikegk/)

# Cultivating Gratitude

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# What Good is Gratitude?

- Gratitude allows celebration of the present
- Gratitude blocks help negative emotions:
  - Anger
  - Resentment
  - Envy Emmons RA, McCullough MC, *Journal of Personality and Psychology*, 2003
- Gratitude helps the quantity and quality of sleep  
Digdon N, Koble A, *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 2011
- Stronger immune systems
- Grateful people are more likely to empathize and help others
- Gratitude helps strengthen social ties
- Grateful people are more **resilient** to stress  
Kashdan TB et al, *Behavior Research and Therapy*, 2006

***Not about thinking that life is perfect***



# David Steindl–Rast

- Born 1926 Vienna
- Catholic Benedictine monk notable for his active participation in interfaith dialogue and work on the interaction between spirituality and science
- MA from the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts
- PhD in experimental psychology from the University of Vienna



# Gratitude Journal



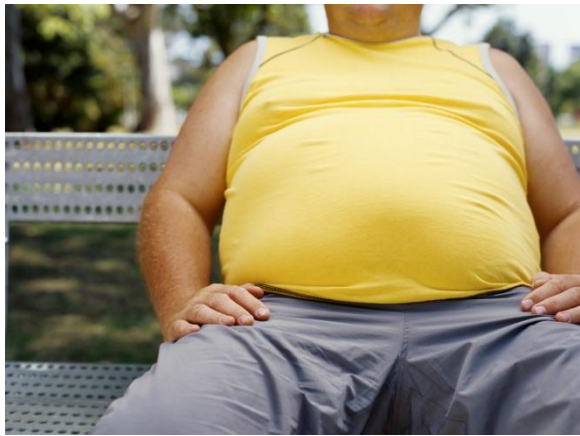
- Brief sentences are all you need
- Mundane or sublime or timeless
- Focusing on *people* to whom you are grateful has more impact than focusing on *things* for which you are grateful
- Don't just go through the motions
- Try to record events that were unexpected or surprising (may elicit stronger levels of gratitude)
- Reflect on what your life would be like *without* certain blessings, rather than just thinking up the good things
- Think about your language:
  - Blessings
  - Abundance
  - Fortunate
  - Gifts



# Connectivity and Humor

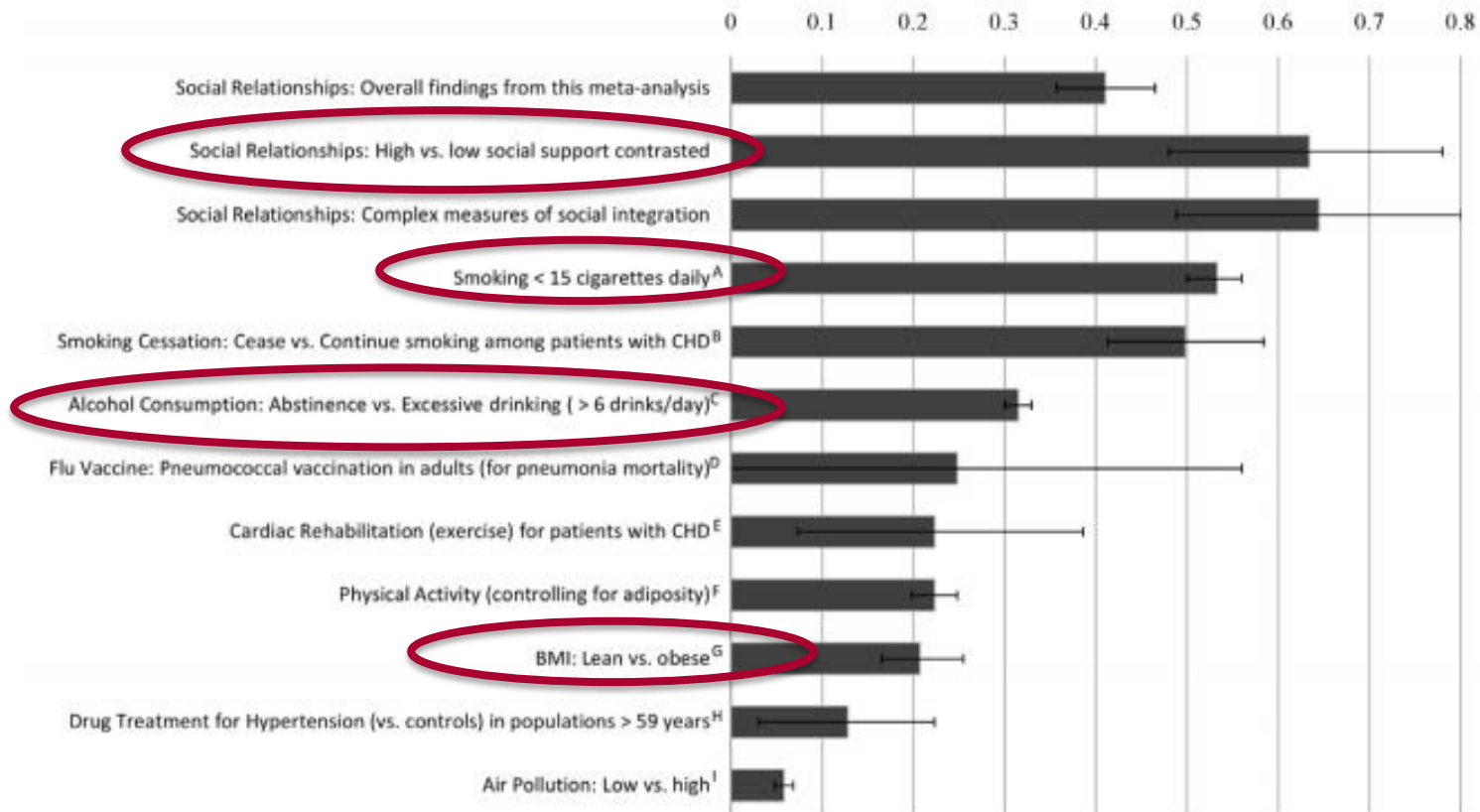
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What human condition increases the risk of death as much as smoking cigarettes and more than physical inactivity or obesity?





# Social isolation and mortality



**Figure 6. Comparison of odds (lnOR) of decreased mortality across several conditions associated with mortality.** Note: Effect size of zero indicates no effect. The effect sizes were estimated from meta analyses: ; A = Shavelle, Paculdo, Strauss, and Kush, 2008 [205]; B = Critchley and Capewell, 2003 [206]; C = Holman, English, Milne, and Winter, 1996 [207]; D = Fine, Smith, Carson, Meffe, Sankey, Weissfeld, Detsky, and Kapoor, 1994 [208]; E = Taylor, Brown, Ebrahim, Jolliffe, Noorani, Rees et al., 2004 [209]; F, G = Katzmarzyk, Janssen, and Ardern, 2003 [210]; H = Insua, Sacks, Lau, Lau, Reitman, Pagano, and Chalmers, 1994 [211]; I = Schwartz, 1994 [212].  
doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316.g006

Holt-Lunstad, 2010

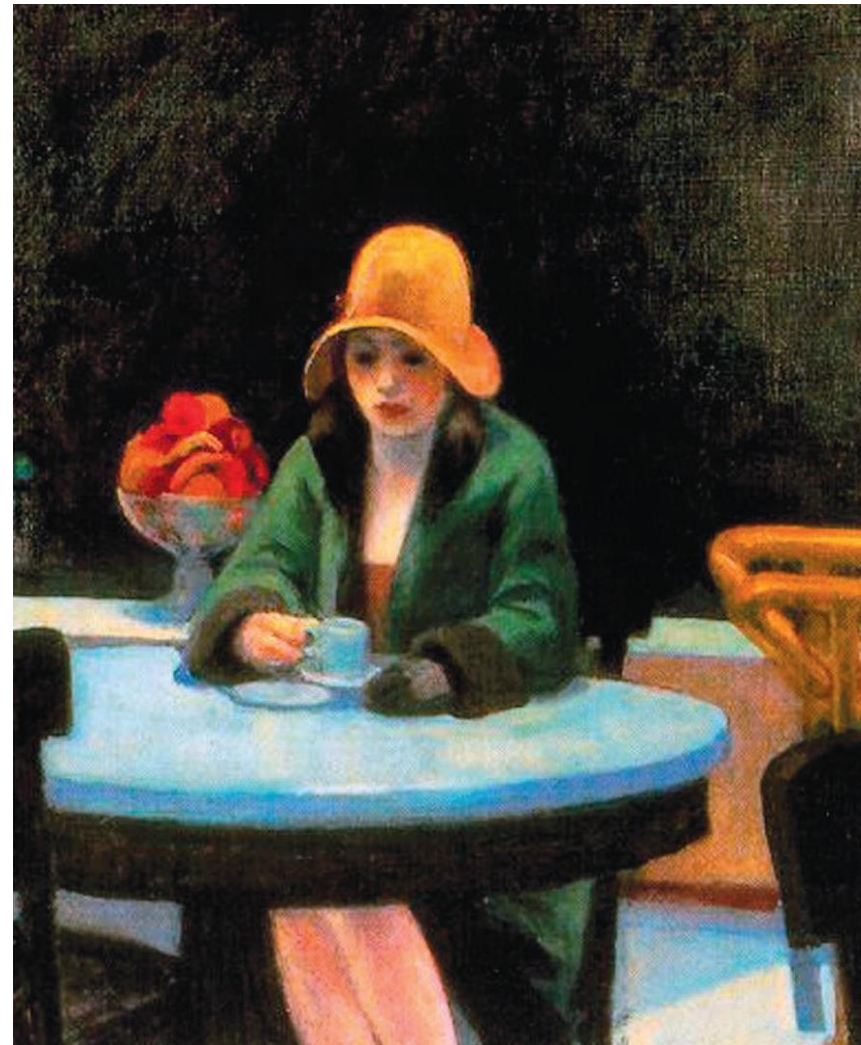


# Social Isolation Impact

Social Isolation = Smoking 15  
Cigarettes a Day



- Chronic loneliness can cause changes in the cardiovascular, immune, and nervous system
- Associated with **26% higher** mortality rates in general population
- Associated with a **hazard ratio of 1.7** for breast-cancer related mortality



# Is Loneliness on the Rise?

- **33.2 million Americans live alone**

- Tripled since 1980

US Census, 2012

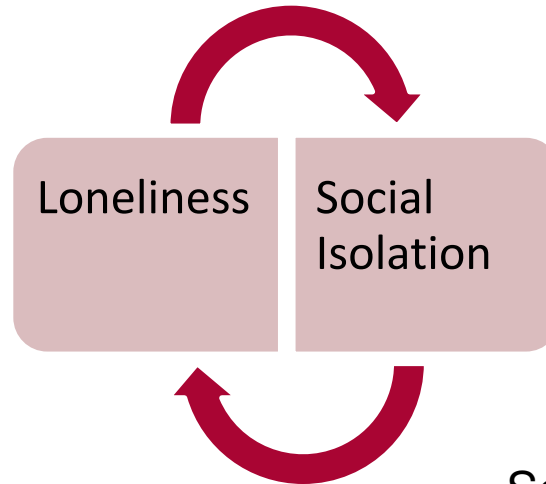
- **2006 study asking Americans how many people they would feel comfortable discussing an important personal issue with**

- Between 1985 and 2004, the avg # dropped from 3 to 2
- **Percent of people with no confidants rose from 10 to 25%**

*American Sociological Review, 2006*



# Loneliness and social isolation



Loneliness –  
“the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person’s network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively”<sup>1</sup>

Social Isolation –  
“The absence of relationships with other people”<sup>2</sup>

1. Perlman and Peplau (1981)
2. De Jong Gierveld et. Al (2006)



# Loneliness is a *subjective* experience

- Some people are socially isolated but they are not lonely
- Some people are lonely even if they have a lot of social contacts

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the end of the word.

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# Loneliness Can Be Overcome

- **Stay connected**
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
  - Shift people's attention and interpretation of social situations in a more positive direction
- Know where your own thermostat is set and try to stay in your comfort zone
  - "The degree of social connection that can improve our health and happiness....is both as simple and as difficult as *being open and available to others.*" (Cacioppo, 2011)





# The Value of Humor



Where the attention goes the emotion flows



*“Why is this night different from all other nights?”*



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ADT





*“Quick! Does somebody have a Clorox wipe?”*



CEDARS-SINAI



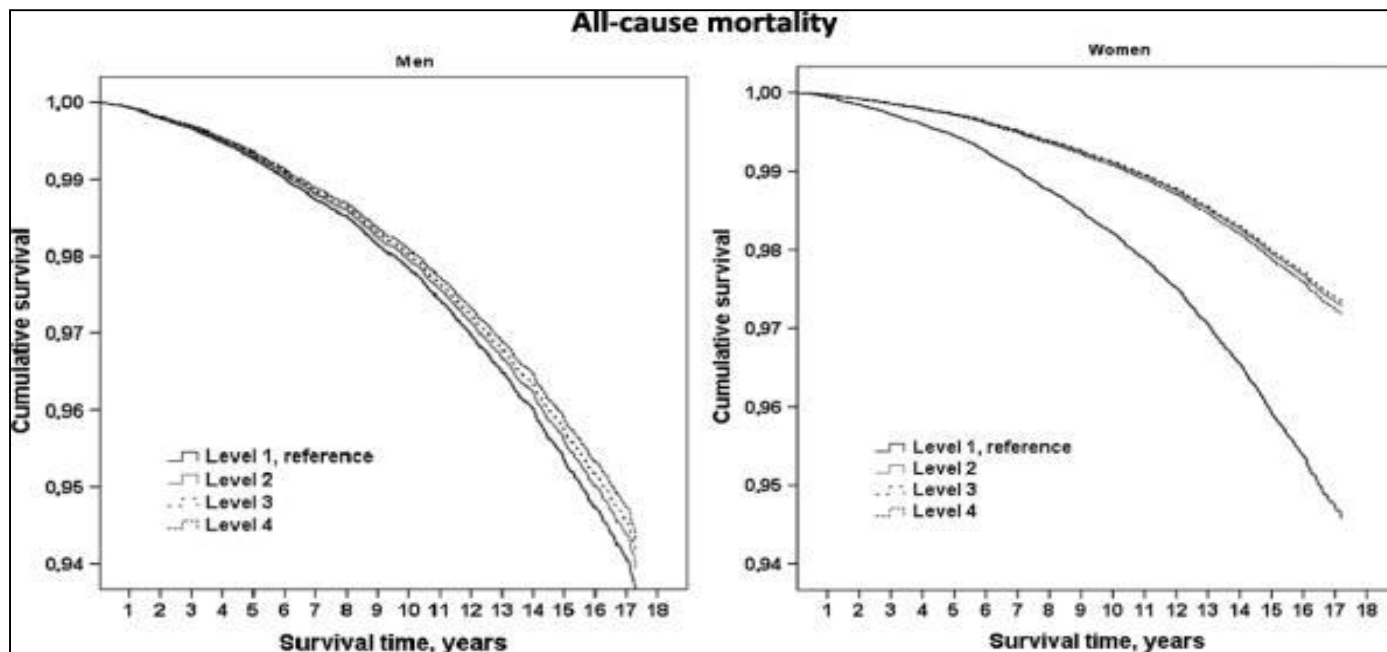


Maddie Dai

*"I'm not the one who threw out everything that didn't spark joy, Robert. Enjoy spending the next few months rolling and unrolling your seven T-shirts."*

# 15 Year Study on Humor and Survival

- Humor associated with survival related to heart disease and infections in women and infections–related mortality in men
- “The most promising candidate for health effects seem to be the cognitive component, taken that habitual cognitive orientations to situations in everyday life are reflected in the effects upon the mood as well as the risk of triggering a stress response.”



# Pearls for Enhancing Resiliency

- Meaning-centered living
- Mastering perspective
- Living with an attitude of gratitude (try a journal)
- Integrating a sense of legacy into our lives
- Being mindful or meditating (however that makes sense to you)
- Try to maintain a sense of humor





# Thank you



Arash Asher  
310-423-0638  
[arash.asher@cshs.org](mailto:arash.asher@cshs.org)