




CARING TIMES
Neighborhood Groups

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Brooklyn



Botanic garden

NOVEMBER

MEDICARE AND AGEISM

Due to a member's recent experience, we started with the importance of mammograms and what a pleasure it was to be treated at Sloan Kettering for a lumpectomy. On Medicare, we discussed who has what coverage with whom, and were surprised that only one of seven is in an Advantage plan. Aging and ageism were also on the agenda, but no definitive examples of ageism were offered, just examples of using our age to our advantage, as in securing a seat on the subway or a discount from Time Warner.

Downtown 1



The High Line

NOVEMBER

CC RESOURCES

One member shared that low iron is an issue for women that isn't really talked about and the challenges it has presented for her. Another member shared that she's been dealing with health issues for most of her life and is now dealing with one that forces her to stay inside during the cold winter months.

We reminded each other that we are here for each other, whether it's picking up some groceries for a home-bound member or getting together to visit for some much-needed company.

A member talked about wanting to get more involved in politics. Some suggestions for involvement from those present included working with the

minister at Judson Church, and TTN committees including the Civic Action and the Political Special Interest Group.

Another member mentioned that she frequents a restaurant/bar owned by a journalist in the neighborhood called The Half King, (located in Chelsea on 23rd Street) for their evening readings and events. She invited us to be in touch, so we could go together.

Lincoln Square



Lincoln center

SEPTEMBER

LEARNING TO ASK OTHERS FOR HELP

The meeting host shared information about her career and personal life, which explained why the discussion topic of asking for help particularly resonated with her. She related that learning how to help her sons when they faced challenges growing up led to the formation of *The Attention Factor*. The mission statement of her business is “to help you discover your own personal *Attention Factor*: what kind of attention you need, how much you need, and how to discover what kind/amount of attention others need in order to improve your personal and business relationships.” Determining where each of us needs attention and support from others is the first step toward being able to comfortably ask for help.

Several group members noted that needing help was difficult for them because it reinforced that they were getting older, and not always able to manage things independently. If offered a seat on the train do we worry, “do I look that old?” instead of accepting graciously, because our culture judges older women so harshly.

Health issues for some group members or their loved ones have made asking for help a daily event. Some still worry about the best way to seek help from friends while maintaining self – esteem. Others have decided to go the route of arranging for paid help for caregiving and household chores. Most of us will eventually need a mix of both types of help.

We emphasized that everyone in the room had taken the step of joining the Caring Collaborative. CC membership gives us a route to seek assistance via e-mail to Shawndra, the CC Coordinator, with the assurance that non-

judgmental help will be offered by another CC member. As Neighborhood group members get to know each other it is also hoped that they will not be shy in reaching out to each other for help.

FALL CULTURE TIPS from a member who is a long-time tour guide at Lincoln Center

\$10 *Hot Seats* are available for many performances of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

\$10 cash at the box office in the Time Warner Center lobby on Wednesday morning. The next dates will be in mid & late October.

Senior Rush Seats are usually available for NY Philharmonic performances. Senior rush tickets can only be purchased at the David Geffen Hall Box Office on the day of the performance - for availability call (212) 875-5656. If student rush tickets are listed for advance purchase on the Philharmonic's website then senior rush is likely to be offered also.

The TDF windows at the David Rubinstein Atrium on 62nd (between Broadway & Columbus) offer discount tickets for Broadway, Off Broadway, and some Lincoln Center performances. Matinee tickets are sold the day before. The Atrium also offers free and interesting performances every Thursday.

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE FOR URGENT CARE:

The CITYMD location at 2025 Broadway/69th Street is the currently preferred location near Lincoln Square: <https://www.citymd.com/urgent-care-locations/ny/manhattan/west-69th/029>

The NorthwellGoHealth Urgent Care Office on Amsterdam Avenue is no longer staffed with an MD, and not recommended.

MurrayHill/KipsBay



Kips Bay towers

SEPTEMBER

CHOOSING HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS in light of the NY Times article (July 30, 2018) *Shopping for Health Care Simply Doesn't Work. So What Might?*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/30/upshot/shopping-for-health-care-simply-doesnt-work-so-what-might.html>

Members agreed that they don't usually consider cost when choosing providers and that an advantage of using a hospital for diagnostic procedures is that results are available right away to physicians affiliated with that hospital. Several members noted that Medicare supplement plans vary greatly in their coverage and that a procedure covered completely by one plan might be covered only partially or not at all by another.

Members expressed concern that medical advice from different practitioners and other reputable sources is frequently inconsistent and changing. It was agreed that each individual is responsible for conducting her own research and that choices are often a matter of personal judgement. Medical paperwork can be onerous in cases where providers don't accept Medicare. In addition, avoiding overcharges can be challenging, especially when hospitals can bill patients several years after services have occurred.

Members were concerned that some doctors no longer accept Medicare because of low reimbursement rates. A few doctors in New York are becoming concierge doctors: charging patients a yearly fee of up to several thousand dollars to guarantee availability when needed. Some physicians who continue to accept Medicare have limited availability and patients must wait several weeks or months for an appointment.

OCTOBER

COMPUTER SCAMS

Several members of the group received what looked like legitimate contact from Apple but turned out to be scammers who wanted control of their computers and asked for payment to fix nonexistent computer problems. Beware of these scams. Apple will not make direct contact with consumers. They will send you an email requesting that you contact them.

Free or low cost cultural and educational programs in Manhattan

MoMA Prime Time for Seniors

Club Free Time

CUNY Graduate Program lectures

Lincoln Center outdoors

NYPL - book discussions, films, lectures

Lenox Hill and Stein Senior Centers programs and classes

Swan Gallery auction house previews

Baruch Performance Arts Center

Police precinct council meetings

Albertine French bookstore

French Institute films
SUNY and CUNY senior audit programs for courses at nominal costs
Meetup.com groups

FRIENDSHIPS: changes, new opportunities and challenges

Many in the group talked about their sadness in losing friends due to their death or moving away. Most find that it is difficult to make new friends at this stage in life and that new friends tended to be activity partners rather than deep friendships. Some found that volunteering and joining new groups is a good way to form new friendships.

Upper East Side 4



Gracie Mansion

SEPTEMBER

Medical Issues that concern each member.

Issues discussed included dental, arthritis, hair loss, urinary infections and post menopause symptoms. The group was very supportive of each individual and offered helpful suggestions. Brochures were distributed from the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS). HSS offers workshops, classes and support programs, some at no or low cost. For members who could not attend more information may be found at hss.edu/pped.

Upper West Side 1



Fairway Market

SEPTEMBER

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

One of the group members recommended the Barrow Street Theater's production of "Private Peaceful" (about WWI) and in March 2019 at the Park Avenue Armory:

"The Lehman Trilogy." It's a story about exile and a National Theater of London production.

It was noted that a member of the group was also ill -- admitted to the emergency room with multiple lung embolisms -- without telling us until after the fact. The member apologized profusely (haha), but of course in the confusion of hospital admissions amid life and death worries, it's sometimes difficult to even know where your phone is. . . Still, as everyone agreed, we want to be there for each other and we admire the way she created a post-op google doc schedule so that we could all sign up for supportive walks. Perhaps we need to set up partners? Or might we designate someone to be the "contact person" in such a case? That liaison could then leap into social media action and others could take over from there.

A member also invited anyone interested to join her for a "Performing the World" workshop with Barbara Ann Michaels designed to bring out our inner clown. A number of members expressed interest and hoped that the member would report back.

Volunteer opportunities are available through the Allstars Project.

HAPPINESS based roughly on the New York Magazine article about recent research.

The group was divided on whether "happiness" was even a relevant concept for them but we were, as usual, all game to explore this question together.

The discussion began by asking us to come up with a one- or two-word evocation of what happiness means to us, personally, along with a self-rating on a scale of 1 to 5.

Equanimity/balance; a good path, contentment/wellbeing, joy and passion, peace, adventure, connection to the life force, anticipation, curiosity and creativity, creative challenges, grateful, and engaged were among the ideas nominated

Self-evaluations averaged a 4 with the occasional 3 and 5.

The article noted that what people think will make them happy (often material possessions) is generally not what is genuinely fulfilling for them.

Peak experiences don't just keep rolling in, a member noted, and another concurred that the model seemed oddly passive. We have plenty of "plain vanilla moments," another member added. Still, we have the ability to seek out the extraordinary in the ordinary -- to stop and smell the flowers and notice the stunning moon in the night sky. Another member so missed her sunsets during a summer construction but feels blessed by the blazing red sky just outside her window on many an evening. "Vienna is waiting!"

Another member thought about happiness as moments that are not pursued; they occur when you sit down quietly. And overcome you when you are gardening or

listening to music. We can choose to enrich our lives -- through study, through things we pick up.

Another member was most critical of the question. Isn't it a kind of commodification? An odd American cultural idea epitomized by the ubiquitous "have a nice day." Behind it seems to be some kind of "test." Are you a winner or a loser?

Another member concurred, feeling that Calvinist anxiety of the successful "elect" lurking in the shadows. She remembered a story in which after many years of separation the concert cellist, Raya Garbousova (Jonathan Biss' grandmother) called to check in with her violinist father. "Homer! Are you happy?" she asked in her intense manner with a thick Russian accent. "Happy?!?" Her midwestern Protestant father was totally nonplussed. The question simply had no reality in his scheme of things, was not something he had ever considered. He was struck dumb.

Another member was happiest when she became a great grandmother, but it was seeing her daughter so happy to be a grandmother that made her happiest.

Another member thought about how we can choose to change a behavior in pursuit of greater contentment, in the spirit of Seven Habits of Successful People. Happiness can be planned for in a sober manner.

For one member, cleaning and letting go of things is currently a source of happiness (see: The Art of Swedish Death). Instead of leaving things in a will, it would be fulfilling to just ask people what they would like to take. She loved the chase, and loves to look at her things, but would be glad, now, to see them go to good homes.

Another was reminded of the Buddhist metaphor of life as a sand mandala -- ephemeral. And all those boxes of books she had to get rid of. Love's Body (Norman O Brown. . .)!

One member feels the weight of responsibility for her mother's things -- the china on the mantelpiece, the silver. She would love to give it away but she just can't. Wouldn't it be better for someone else to make good use of it? She feels responsible for the "everlasting life" of these things, and has internalized the family story about them.

For two members, it also has to do with the meaning of things. One member realizes the insanity of buying a second home so that she can house her mother's entertaining tools -- the crystal, the silver, the tablecloths and mats. And yet she can't give them away. Too many of them have strong memories connected to shared moments.

One member chose just a few items -- that plaid flannel shirt, but not the tongue pot.

We were reminded of Jonathan Haidt's Happiness Hypothesis thesis having to do with the image of the rider on the elephant: the difference between the cognitive self (trying to do the directing) and the unconscious self (the true power underneath). Happiness comes from the meaningful -- from those acts of making meaning in our life in which the self is not divided in mind/body; left/right; new/old; control/automatic.

One member remembered the documentary film, "Three Identical Strangers" (2018) about triplet children separated at 6 months and placed in working class, middle class, and upper class families respectively to learn something about nature/nurture. They were then reunited at age 19 and discovered their similarities. Is our capacity for happiness and where we land partly genetically determined?

There may be a psychological "set point" to which we might be genetically predisposed but of course we also have the power to cultivate happiness. One member has a friend who surrounds herself only with optimistic people.

Two members noted, though, how early children differentiate themselves in their spirit and temperament. Even infants have personality. But then parents are attuned to his/her happiness and are empathetic rather than self-absorbed, and this has consequences. It's the nurture -- even in utero -- that does it. It's epigenetic. Imprinting.

We ended on a more spiritual note with an invocation of Hillel and ideas of altruism, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I?" The road to wellness is to be true to yourself, to grow and achieve mastery over one's own destiny, do things well, establish good relationships, and be one's best self.

It was noted that there is great joy in giving but also joy in receiving -- which for some is harder.

One member is impressed by the Yom Kippur reminder that we cannot know how much time we have; consequently, we must make the most of every moment. "Live every day as if it's your last."

OCTOBER

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation of the play, "The Ferryman" and reminds us to get our tickets now for the March production of the "Lehman Trilogy" in the Park Avenue Armory.

Recommendation: a book that seems a descendent of Holocaust literature by Jennifer Teege, [My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me: A Black Woman Discovers Her Family's Nazi Past.](#)

THE FAILURE TO BE KIND. Roughly based on George Saunders' ideas about regrets –

The discussion opened with an anecdote about the member's annoyance at a recent chamber music concert. A patron sitting next to her was incessantly fidgeting, digging into his pockets and squirming in every way possible. She had half a mind to complain, to ask him to please settle down (a form of unkindness?). But then, instead, thinking about our theme of kindness and tolerance, she simply closed her eyes.

It's a sign of our "on edge" times, she recalled a recent incident in the L train in which a man of color took offense at a T-shirt that read "Make Racism Wrong Again." Four people intervened to calm him down, asking, "Didn't you read it?" He had mistaken the message for its reverse and was ready to take on the poor protester.

It's a time of the short fuse; witness police violence. There's a need to "take it down a notch."

Thinking about Saunders' story of the classmate bullied in elementary school and his failure to intervene, the member wondered about situations in which we have failed to be kind...

The German example of a failure to stand up to the Nazis sprang to another member's mind, along with the US Congress in its spinelessness. There have been acts of courage: the assistants who removed a letter to South Korea from the President's desk (Anonymous, New York Times).

Another member noted the recent book by Arlie Hochschild (Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right) about her time spent with low-income Trump supporters in Louisiana. President Trump divides us with his "caravan/Kavanaugh" talk. "Everybody has to have his nigger," One member remembered an ex saying. How do you turn it around?

Another member remembered reviews of that Hochschild book; the author developed real empathy for her subjects who felt cheated by various "line cutters" in our society, people they felt were receiving benefits that they, as hard-working Americans did not receive. The member could relate to that sentiment; there was a time when she struggled financially and resented recent immigrants who qualified for assistance when she did not.

We struggled with these thoughts -- how to get others to follow the example and just "shut their eyes?" (and ignore whatever impertinence. . .) We agreed, though, that it is easy for us to say, we who are in so many ways so privileged. Equanimity and generosity are easier for the better off.

Thinking about resentment of the immigrant, it's easy to forget that Steve Jobs' family came from Syria. And if we just paid higher taxes, we could cover everybody's health insurance. Following the Mayo Clinic example, doctors could be salaried. A member remembers a doctor who saw everyone.

Remembering the class resentments of the 1960's between the hard hats and the youth who called the police pigs, one member mused on upper middle-class privilege; another remembered the sense of betrayal the working class soldiers felt upon their return from Vietnam. Is there any instance in which we would refuse forgiveness and countenance capital punishment? Eichmann? McVeigh? Perhaps it's not so black and white.

But we remembered moments in which our fellow New Yorkers have shown that they care by offering us a seat or checking every pocket when asked for a pen or pencil. But by the same token, another member remembered the morning she didn't have a pen and the rejection she had to face as one after another of her B train Brooklyn train-mates dismissed her request with disdain. A class issue, we agreed.

But in another member's building, the neighbors form a tight community. A member's daughter who lives in Wisconsin also experiences strong relationships with neighbors. And yet, we can't greet everyone we see on the streets of Brooklyn the way the Iowans of Postville do (as noted by a Lubavitcher living in both communities in the study, Postville. A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America).

Another member recalled a group of black teenage boys who jumped down onto the tracks to rescue a man who had fallen. They deposited him on the platform and went on their way. Rather like the young man the member recalled, the one in Paris from Mali who, like Spiderman, thought nothing about rescuing the four year old who was hanging from a balcony railing.

Everyday acts of kindness in NY include carrying bags for others because they are heavy or covering your neighbor with an umbrella. One member likes to remove barriers with waiters to personalize the experience. She doesn't like to feel "waited on," and besides, if she is friendly, maybe she gets better service! Another mused, "people like to have their bubble burst."

One member once confronted an alcoholic office manager in her struggling new practice to suggest she begin to address her problem. Her employee went back to school and completed a degree but called 10 years later, this August, to confess that she had stolen from her. What to do? "Give it to Planned Parenthood in my name," she requested, but as of today she has no reason to believe that this has occurred. One wants to be kind, but not to be "taken for a fool," either.

Another member reflected on how her broken wrist this time around is easier than when she was a mother. Now she is only taking care of herself! She could be bitter but she isn't. She had to give up a trip to London and has given up bike riding forever. Still she is being kind to herself.

But New Yorkers are not always kind. When a member helpfully suggested to a young woman crossing the street with her bicycle that she really ought to be

wearing a helmet, the woman replied, "Fuck you, bitch." Rather than assist, a man on a member's last flight told her, "If you can't lift your own bag, don't bring it."

Do all these issues concern boundaries and where people set them? A member remembered a health food store client in Princeton who was a breast cancer patient. Looking at our member's shopping basket, she observed that all her choices were "not recommended" for cancer patients. Was she being intrusive? Resentful? Kind? It's hard sometimes to read intentions and decide whether a boundary has been crossed.

Another member wondered if it isn't a matter of not focusing on the negative.

Upper West Side 2



116th St. Subway Station

JULY

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FEELING ALONE OR LONELY?

When are you alone and are just fine, and when do you feel lonely? (even when you are with people)

Our discussion revolved around the times when we feel lonely and what we do about it. For the most part, most of us agreed that we often choose to be alone to do things, be at home in quiet, go to a museum, but that at some point, we need to connect with friends or family. Being alone or lonely are two different things. We talked about what we do when we feel lonely.

We discussed the changes in today's communication which has morphed to email rather than phone conversations. It was agreed that calling someone can relieve loneliness. The friend or family member doesn't have to be nearby. Some of us have friends that go way back in our lives, and having a phone talk is easy and comforting. One suggestion, by a member, was to have a regular phone date with a college friend who lives on the West Coast.

Another means to stop feeling lonely is to get out of the house. Just being on the street or in the park, where there are other people is helpful. Sometimes being in a group is a lonely experience. It can happen at a conference. A solution for that experience was to approach another person

standing alone and make conversation. One has to take the extra step: approach a neighbor, for example.

That brought up the subject of living in a high rise. One of the group has started an email group within her building. The neighbors all agreed to be in touch in time of need. (It might lead to a friendship)

Other suggestions:

- Facebook groups of people with same interests
- Video calls

The conclusion:

- Do something when feeling lonely.
- Get out, do a chore that had been on your list.
- Book Suggestions: A Gentleman In Moscow, Commonwealth by Ann Patchett, Alan Alda's book

AUGUST

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT GROWING OLD/FRIENDSHIP

The facilitator started the discussion by sharing a personal story. She also handed out a 2-page compilation of statements about friendships that she had researched on-line.

She reminded us that at last month's meeting, there was a discussion about the need to be the initiator with a new person with whom you wish to become friends, and not to take it personally, if it's not reciprocated.

A statement from the Atlantic Monthly, Sept. Issue:

"Longing for closeness and connection is pervasive. Which suggests that most of us are stumbling through the world pining for companionship that could be easily provided by the stumblers all around us. So, set aside this article, turn to someone nearby, and try to make a friend. You both could probably use one."

Another statement *"Don't dismiss the humble acquaintance."*

Discussed, in no particular order:

- Some of the difficulties in making friendships later in life may be that we are more set in our ways and perhaps more intolerant, to which someone said, for them, it was not intolerance, but having 'less tolerance' for certain behavior.
- When there are inequities in the balance of the friendship. One person wants more from the friendship than the other person wants or is

prepared to give. Maybe the person who wants more needs to downshift or to end it

- New friendships don't have the memories and deep roots to weather a problem when it arises and one may choose to walk away rather than talk and try to work it out.
- The feelings of being rejected by a friend.

10 Questions to help Decipher between Friends vs. Acquaintances

1. Who is a friend who will be there for you in the middle of the night when you need help?
2. Who can you be truly authentic and real with?
3. Who can you trust with a secret?
4. Who would stand up for you when you're not around, and everyone is talking trash on you?
5. Who isn't afraid to keep you accountable?
6. Who's quick to listen and slow to offer advice?
7. Who will stand with you when everyone else leaves?
8. Who accepts you for who you are and doesn't judge?
9. Who's consistently been there for you?
10. Who do you go to for advice?

There was a discussion on the need to make younger friends since so many of our friendships fall away over the years, due to moving, illness, death, etc. Some suggestions for making younger friends and finding new activities where they can be found:

- **Meet-up groups** https://www.meetup.com/cities/us/ny/new_york/
- **Church or Synagogue or JCC** memberships
- **Dorot** on West 85th Street. <http://www.dorotusa.org/>
212-769-2850 Dorot is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to alleviate social isolation and provide concrete services to older adults.
- **Hamilton House** <http://www.projectfind.org> Provides seniors with the services and supports they need to live rich independent lives on the upper west side of Manhattan.

Research notes compiled for discussion:

Friendships don't happen overnight, usually. "For two people to develop a true friendship, each one has to kind of reveal, very slowly, a little part of themselves and get the other person to trust them. It's almost like a dance that goes back and forth," says Levine.

Adds Nelson: "We want our new friends to act like best friends, we need to recognize that it takes time."

Putting myself out there only to be rejected is what prevents me — and a great number of people — from being more aggressive in meeting potential new friends. After all, it's one thing to be home alone on a Friday night because you haven't worked especially hard at making new friends. It's another thing altogether to be at home alone despite working hard at making new friends.

This is where women's friendships—which because of their emotional intimacy can, according to Tannen, be far more gratifying than those between men—get especially complicated: Not knowing why a friend is ending her relationship with you, she said, "is really hurtful because knowing what's going on is a big part of friendship."

It's a common belief that men are more competitive than women, but Tannen's findings suggest that the reality is less clear-cut. Women are simply competitive in a way that's less obvious—they're competitive about connection. Among women, prized is the degree to which one is privy into the details of her friends' lives.

Common Misconceptions and Truths about Adult Friendships

1. We should know how to make and keep friends as an adult. Navigating friendships as an adult can be difficult. Like all relationships, friendships require time and effort, and this isn't always easy to commit, especially when we are trying to balance our other relationships and responsibilities. The challenges we experience in our friendships can also change throughout our lives. Even if we had success when we were younger, we might suddenly find ourselves in a new city or stage of life where we struggle to expand our social circle, maintain old friendships, or even disengage from an unhealthy or toxic friendship. And as wonderful as technology is, it's changing the way we relate to each other and creating new opportunities for misunderstanding that we need to learn to manage.

2. We should have a "best" friend. As we age, our understanding of what a "best friend" is can change. What's more important than the labels or status we give our friends is whether our friendships are reciprocated—that is, both people in the friendship consider the other a friend. This might sound simple enough, but research suggests that up to half of our friendships are

actually unreciprocated!

It can also help to remember that one person doesn't have to meet all of our friendship needs. Having one friend we confide in or turn to for support and another we call for weekend outings is no less special than having one best friend or "our person" with whom we do everything.

What can you do about friendship misconceptions?

- Notice your self-imposed rules or beliefs about your friendships and your role as a friend (i.e., your shoulds, musts, and have-tos).
- Challenge these ideas with more realistic, helpful thoughts. Changing your "have-tos" into "want-tos" is a quick strategy that can make a big difference in your willingness and ability to connect with others—e.g., "I have to make more friends" versus "I want to meet new people."
- Accept that being critical is really counterproductive. It won't motivate you to put yourself out there and be vulnerable in the way that's needed to build genuine, close friendships.
- Recognize that you are not the only one who struggles with friendships. We can all afford to think about the ways we can strengthen and build on our friendships and social circles.

Ultimately, the key is being open. This doesn't necessarily mean opening up to a friend or sharing one's struggles publicly. It can be as simple as acknowledging our difficulties and strengths internally and being open to the information and experiences that conflict with our ideas about what adult friendships are supposed to be like.

Friendships are always susceptible to circumstances. Start a relationship with the right expectations. Don't expect too much. If you start with high hopes, the relationship is likely to flounder.

Sally Olds article: Finding New Friends

"Ideally it's good to set up three crucial elements: Find people who live near you, see them on a more or less regular schedule, and give the connection enough time to let a friendship take hold,"

But developing a friendship is more complicated than simply meeting a new person. We can meet people waiting at bus stops, standing in line, riding the elevator, or even sitting next to someone at a nail salon. I know women who have developed friendships from all these situations. But it's what happens after you meet someone that turns an acquaintance into a friend. When you find a potential soul mate, don't be shy about making the first move. Many of us are insecure and afraid of rejection, thinking, "If she really liked me she'd call me." The other person may be thinking the same thing about you, so here's what I've learned: Someone has to take the initiative.

I once had an extra concert ticket and called 18 women before I found someone who was free that night. I'm sure some were genuinely busy; others weren't interested. But many remembered my gesture and eventually reached out to me.

How to Revive a Friendship By Anna Goldfarb, July 26, 2018

Former friends occupy a peculiar space in one's social circle. Ex-bosom buddies might know some of the most intimate details of your life — the name of your first pet, which dress you wore to prom, who broke your heart freshman year of college — but may have no clue about the hopes, dreams and fears you hold today.

So when those friendships fade, particularly the ones built over years or decades, a rare bond is lost. Indeed, moving from acquaintance to casual friend typically takes around 50 hours of shared activities and everyday talk, and it can take more than 200 hours before someone becomes a best friend, according to a [report](#) in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.

However, people who are looking to recapture a close friendship after some time apart don't quite fit into this framework. It can be disorienting to feel you're back at square one with a person you already have a shared history with.

Studies show that high-quality friendships provide many positive health benefits, such as lower incidences of chronic

illnesses, higher levels of happiness and lower mortality rates. Robust social support networks can also be a buffer for stress, depression and anxiety, according to researchers. So it makes sense to want to look backward at an old friendship for emotional support in the future.

“The extent to which you’ve managed to stay in touch or how up-to-date you are on each other’s lives will likely dictate how you’ll go about rekindling your relationship,” she said.

She also suggests identifying what variables, if any, have changed since your falling out. Maybe you’re in a more stable place in life and are confident you can be a better, more attentive friend this time around. Thinking about the reasons you grew apart and how things might be different now can help you take the steps needed to rebuild a closer and longer lasting friendship.

Manage expectations

Important life changes — medical issues, relocations, having children, getting married, getting divorced — can influence a friend’s life in ways you may not predict.

“You shouldn’t go in as if you can trust this person or assume that you know anything about this person because you really are meeting a stranger in some ways for the first time again,” Dr. Harden Bradford said.

It’s wise to keep one’s guard up, at least at the beginning. Keep sensitive topics close to your chest at first. Disclosing particulars about intimate relationships and finances can overwhelm your nascent friendship.

Resume contact with purpose.

Kayleen Schaefer, author of Text me When You Get Home: The Evolution and Triumph of Modern Female Friendship, suggests being upfront with why you’re reaching out after so much time has gone by. If you miss the person, be open about that. Noting it takes bravery and some risk, she likens reconnection to initiating a courting process: “You have to show the best side of yourself, which is probably your most honest, upfront side.” If you rush the integration process, you could be setting yourself up for disappointment if the friendship doesn’t take hold in the way you anticipated.

Prepare for all outcomes

Dr. Yager, who has a Ph.D. in sociology, concedes that in most instances of a rekindled friendship, the bond may not be as intimate as it was before the

breakup. However, she has observed cases where the friendship does intensify after a reconciliation. Although it doesn't happen as often, in those cases, it was worth the time and effort to reach out.

"It takes two to start, and maintain, a friendship, but only one to end it," Dr. Yager said. "So you both have to share the goal of keeping your renewed friendship going." It's also possible that despite your best efforts, your friend might not be willing or able to reconnect for a variety of reasons that could be personal (unresolved hurt feelings), practical (they're not available to nurture a friendship) or something else altogether, Ms. Kirmayer said.

Whatever the result, she recommends practicing self-compassion if things do not go as planned, which can help minimize sorrow and heartache.

OCTOBER

WHAT ENHANCES, ENRICHES, AND ADDS JOY TO YOUR LIFE?

There are many enjoyable pastimes as well as "little things" that continue to bring us happiness each day.

Nature, the Great Outdoors

- Taking care of houseplants, visiting public gardens; gardening; volunteer land maintenance in Central Park
- Summering on an island in Minnesota surrounded by wildlife and beautiful sunsets
- Birdwatching
- Central Park Tours <http://www.centralparknyc.org/tours/>
- Pets

Reading recommendations:

Fiction

- [The Sympathizer](#) (Viet Thanh Nguyen)
- [The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair](#) (Joel Dicker)
- [A Gentleman in Moscow](#) (Amor Towles)
- [The Overstory](#) (Richard Powers)

Non-fiction

- [Out of Egypt](#) (Andre Aciman)
- [Natural Causes](#) (Barbara Ehrenreich)

Theatre, cinema, music recommendations

- Black Klansman [film]
- Landmark Theatre <https://www.landmarktheatres.com/new-york-city/the-landmark-at-57-west>

- 59 East 59 Street Theatre <http://www.59e59.org>
- Atlantic Theatre Company <https://atlantictheater.org>
- Signature Theatre <https://www.signaturetheatre.org>
- Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players <http://www.jupitersymphony.com>
- Music Mondays <https://www.musicmondays.org>
- Kauffman Center <https://www.kauffmancenter.org>
- Documentaries:
 - Welcome to the Neighborhood
 - Far From the Tree
 - Three Identical Strangers
- Kanopy video rentals/streaming through NYPL or Roku
- Podcasts: Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me; This American Life; The Hidden Brain

And more!

- Enjoying a new grandchild
- Learning Group: <http://www.questlifelong.org>
- Sewing, crafts, handiwork
- Club Free Time <https://www.clubfreetime.com>
- The Staten Island Ferry (free!)
- The High Line <https://www.thehighline.org>
- Walking the Brooklyn Bridge
- Singing in a choir
- Participating in political postcard campaigns
- Enjoying the convenience of reorganized space with new cabinets
- A glass electric tea kettle starts the mornings off with a smile
- Helping people resolve problems
- Keeping a Daily Gratitude Journal
- Volunteering at synagogues (tour docent, soup kitchen, community group)
- Lighting candles for beauty and to promote a meditative mood
- Book groups
- Vases of cut flowers
- A very comfortable bed pillow

Upper West Side 3



West End Avenue

OCTOBER

FOSTERING FRIENDSHIPS AMONG MEMBERS

- Finding a Health Buddy within the group
- The possibility of arranging with building staff or neighbors to check if we don't hear when expected from a fellow group member
- How we should respond if we notice a member with impairment? How does each one of us want others to respond if we are the one impaired?

We spoke about pendants folks wear to call for help, and most of us felt that a smart watch, which could always be on our wrists, replacing the Fitbit monitors many of us wear, would be a more stylish alternative for us right now.

We discussed briefly end of life preparation, but we realized we do have level one papers, such as wills, powers of attorney, health care proxies, but some of us are not yet ready to do that planning. Do we want do not resuscitate orders now? We discussed geriatric care managers and we will suggest to the CC committee that we do a citywide program about organizing our paper work, discussing what geriatric care managers could do for us now and in the future. We also discussed what we carry with us for identification purposes and perhaps the CC committee could draft a list of emergency information that we all need to have ready for someone else to take charge of if we are unable to do so, such as computer and phone passwords, building super or doorman phone numbers.

The majority of the meeting was spent on establishing sufficient trust and friendship among our group members so that we may be able to act in a supportive way in the future. We feel that once monthly meetings with folks who don't appear each month is not enough. Perhaps we will establish another forum, a lunch, a dinner during the month but for now, we each received a new list of personal Information about the group members and

we decided to call one member of the group to share some one on one time with during this month.

Upper West Side 4



Soldiers and Sailors Monument

OCTOBER

WHAT I WISH I HAD BEEN TOLD WHEN I WAS YOUNGER

One woman was saddened by the fact that she had not kept in touch with old friends. She regretted that now her family had passed away that no one knew her when she was younger. She wished she had been told to stay in contact with people even though jobs and addresses may have changed.

Another member said that she wished her parents had talked more about money. She wished that someone would have told her that teachers make very little, that doctors and lawyers make more. She wished that she had been given more guidance into how much things like insurance, cars, homes, and schooling really cost. Money was a subject that was just not discussed. Rather than getting a masters in English and acting, this member would have been better served getting an MBA.

The third member said that she wished that her parents had taken more interest in her future rather than just assuming that she would get married and have children. She wishes that her parents had said, "Think big and Aim high."

Another said that she wished that someone had given her guide lines as to what her talents were and how to make a plan to best utilize them.

Summary: we felt no one really mentored us by suggesting a plan, or why it made sense to move ahead in our career or away from it. We felt we were not given guidance, but ended up figuring it out on our own.

NOVEMBER

FRIENDSHIP: DIFFERENT KINDS, DIFFERENT PEOPLE

The first comment came from a woman who realized that she had friends in different categories. One friend was great at tennis, great talking about tennis, but on other subjects never really gave good or cogent comments.

Some friends are for discussing husband health issues or yoga or other categories, but only very old friends are the ones you talk to about matters close to the heart.

The group felt that one-on-one friends were more likely rather than groups. One member said that she had a lot of surface friends and probably 2 super close friends. Even an ex-husband turned into a friend once you get over the anger.

Faraway friends/long-term friends were important, too for remembering shared childhood memories that only they had experienced together. "Useful" friends were the best. You give, and you get back.

Some friends were only for shared passions/hobbies i.e., tennis, sewing, ballet. Rarely do one-on-one friends end up being friends with your other friends. There was importance set on that we should not expect more from people if they cannot give. Either be happy with what the relationship is or move on.

We talked about what do you do when a friendship is no longer rewarding. Confrontation was not suggested. It was thought better to "just dilute," do not be available, take longer to respond. Eventually, the other party will realize it is time to fade.

Queens



The Unisphere

OCTOBER

AGING SOLO

The group discussed what our current experience with aging solo looked like and how we would describe our perfect living situation in the future.

What should solo agers be thinking about:

- Building up our support system
- Getting our financial and legal papers in order and making sure someone knows where to find our information and has access to it. Some of these include emergency contacts, tax documents, passwords/PINS, credit cards, retirement and pension contacts, legal documents, religious practices, medical documents, monthly bills and how they're paid, etc.

- What are the options for housing (staying in place, shared space, assisted living)
- Finding a location that meets our needs (transportation, recreation, etc.)
- If staying in place solo make sure your home is safe and easy to maneuver, get a medical alert system in place

The following resources were provided:

- AARP
- Village to Village Network (VTVNetwork.org)
- *Essential Retirement Planning for Solo Ager* by Sara Gerber
- *How to Plan for Aging if You're an Elder Orphan* by Teresa Mears
- *Who Will Take Care of Me When I am Old?* By Joy Loverde

Finally, we discussed a to-do list:

- Things I want to start but haven't started
- Things I want to change but haven't changed
- Things I want to stop but haven't stopped
- Things I want to say but haven't said
- Things I want to give away to someone while I'm still alive