

# The Case for Connection

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## Our Research and Findings

We decided to take things a little deeper. We studied all of the relevant fields of knowledge to get a more complete understanding of what affects employee engagement.



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Here are some of the things that we found:

### Psychology

Humans have a number of needs they expect to have met at work<sup>1</sup> and in their Church community relationships. These include:

Needs	Details
Respect	To be treated with honor
Recognition	To feel appreciated
Belonging	To love and be loved
Autonomy (Freedom)	To be trusted with authority
Personal Growth	To be believed in and trusted
Meaning	To make an eternal difference

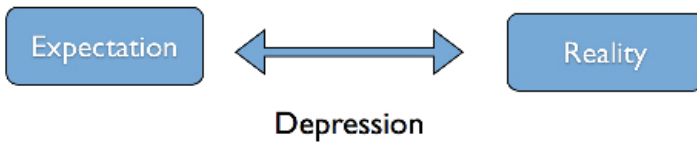
If these basic human needs are not being met, connection suffers.

## Psychiatry

Psychiatrists regularly see patients from the business world who don't spend enough time connecting with other people in healthy relationships. Dr. Edward Hallowell has written extensively about this topic in the *Harvard Business Review* and in several books<sup>2</sup>. He notes that a lack of connection at work increases:

- Loneliness
- Isolation
- Confusion
- Distrust
- Disrespect
- Dissatisfaction

The impact of disconnection in church communities is even more dramatic, because the expectation of connection is higher!



## Political Sociology

The degree of connection in a nation has been described as “social capital” by political sociologists<sup>3</sup>.

Francis Fukuyama has shown that nations with higher social capital (connection) have:

- Higher economic growth
- Greater trust
- More cooperation

In the Church, we will more effectively accomplish our mission through creating and maintaining a connection culture.

Fukuyama measured this connectedness by investigating “**intermediate associations**” - memberships in organizations in which the parties are not related by blood. The trust and cooperation that comes from these intermediate associations makes it possible for people who are unrelated to

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unite together in volunteer community-based and religious organizations. Low trust society/nations such as China and parts of Italy have few intermediate associations because trust doesn't extend to non-family members.

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### Consider America:

- Since World War II, subjective well-being (happiness) has been flat although economic prosperity has increased dramatically.
- Experts believe a lack of connection and community has kept subjective well-being stagnant<sup>4</sup>.

### Consider the Church:

- Since 1960, Church Growth statistics have been going in the wrong direction.
- Our contention is that most churches have become religious (through a focus on functional task excellence) and forgot what it means to live and function as a connection culture!

**Reflective Question: Do you agree with what these conclusions are suggesting and why?**

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### Social Science

Social science research studies have documented the positive effect connection has on human beings from birth to our twilight years<sup>5</sup>.

- Babies who are held = healthier
- Students who have eye contact = perform better academically
- Patients who have social support = recover faster
- Adults with greater connection = more creative, better problem-solvers
- Seniors who have more social relationships = live longer

## Neuroscience

Neuroscience research has established that connection has a positive biochemical effect on the brain and that the lack of connection has a negative biochemical effect on the brain<sup>6</sup>. Connection:

- Reduces stress hormones (epinephrine, norepinephrine, cortisol)
  - Increases dopamine which enhances attention and pleasure
  - Increases serotonin which reduces fear and worry
  - Increases oxytocin which makes us more trusting of others
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Additionally, scientists have discovered from split brain surgery on epilepsy patients that:

- The Right Brain: the unconscious mind that controls emotions
- The Left Brain: the conscious mind that controls logic, speech
- Cognitive scientist Michael Gazzaniga has labeled the left brain “the interpreter”

The process: Emotions arise from the right brain and frequently drive our behavior. The left brain then works to come up with an explanation to make sense of our behavior. This concept confirms our findings in the area of Organizational Behavior (next page).

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## Organizational Behavior

1. The Corporate Executive Board’s 2004 study<sup>7</sup> of 50,000 employees established:

- Emotional factors (meaning of work and how people relate with one another) are on average **four times as effective** as rational factors (compensation, job title) in engaging employees
  - Engaged employees are 20% more productive than the average employee
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