



BEGINNING LEVEL EXERCISE: COMMUNITY

The quality of your connections is far more important than the quantity. You can have a million followers on social media and feel completely isolated. So, if you have a small community or a small group of people who you feel are truly supportive in your life, great! If you have at least one other person you feel intimately connected to, you face much less risk of experiencing the negative health effects of isolation. That one person could be your therapist. It may be your doctor. It can be a co-worker or a neighbor. It can also be a pet. It can be anybody who you feel is truly there for you, who you can call on when you need someone. Think about who this is for you.

Take an inventory—with as much specificity as possible—of who already supports you.

Answer these questions for yourself:

Who are your sources of inspiration? Reflect on any family members, surrogate family, friends, leaders (alive or not) and groups that you look to for inspiration and/or support.

Why is this person (or persons) so important to you?

What is it like to feel fully seen, acknowledged, and accepted for who you are?

What is it like to be that person for someone else?

In what ways do you express your gratitude for their support?

Have you told them lately how important they are to you?

Remember, these people can be anyone in your life whose presence provides you with strength and comfort (family, ancestors, friends, coworkers, neighbors, pets, social groups, support groups, exercise groups). And if you can't think of someone you feel close and connected to, write about ways that you can work on establishing one or two new, supportive relationships in your life.