

March 2020

The Library as Social Connector

This presentation has been adapted from an ALA Midwinter 2019 presentation by Betha Gutsche & Jennifer Lee Peterson.

Stay connected! **#libsocialconnect**

What do you do when you walk into a room at a party and you do not know anyone there?

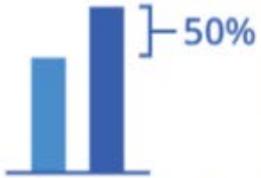
CONNECTION



“Social connections are as important to our survival and flourishing as the need for food, safety, and shelter.”*

*Source: [Social Connection Makes a Better Brain](#); E. E. Smith; The Atlantic; Oct 29, 2013

THE BENEFITS OF HIGH SOCIAL CONNECTION:



50% increased chance of longevity



stronger gene expression for immunity (research by Steve Cole, UCLA)



lower rates of anxiety and depression



higher self-esteem and empathy



better emotion regulation skills

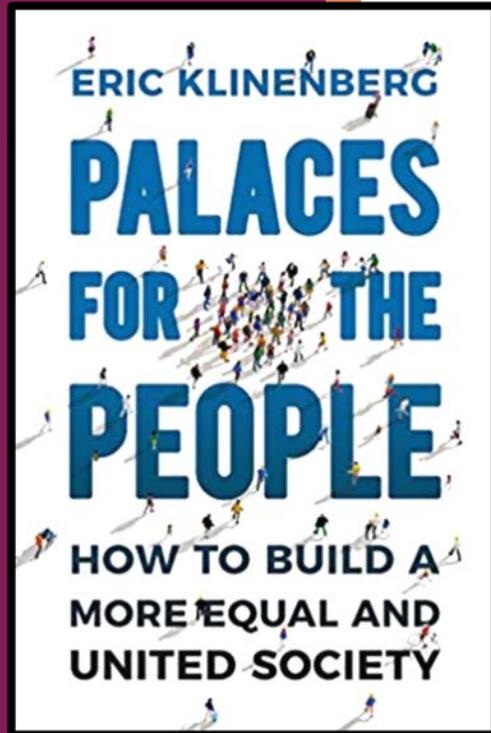


Social connection creates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Social connectedness generates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional and physical well-being.”*

*Source: Connectedness & Health: The Science of Social Connection; Dr. Emma Seppala; Stanford Medicine; May 8, 2014

The Social Infrastructure Factor



“Libraries are an example of what I call “social infrastructure”: the physical spaces and organizations that shape the way people interact.

Eric Klinenberg

EROSION OF SOCIAL CONNECTION

Bowling alone

“If people bowl alone, they do not participate in social interaction and civic discussions that might occur in a league environment.”

↓ Wikipedia



HOW FACEBOOK MAKES US UNHAPPY

New
Yorker

6 Ways Social Media Affects Our
Mental Health

Forbes

Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

Atlantic

Feeling Lonely? Too Much Time On
Social Media May Be Why

NPR

A photograph of a man sitting on a wide set of grey stone stairs. He is wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers. He has a distressed expression, with his right hand covering his face and his left hand holding a smartphone. The stairs are very wide and lead up to a building with a metal railing on the right. The background shows a concrete wall and some greenery.

We've lost that “we feeling”

Photo: Stressed by [aaayymm eelectriik](#) on [Flickr CC BY 2.0](#)

REVIVAL OF THE “REAL”

MOLESKINE®

Legendary notebooks



Photo: Moleskindisplay by B. Gutsch,

Photo by Wei-Cheng Wu on [Unsplash](#)



Photo by Aaron Burden on [Unsplash](#)



Photo by [David Klein](#) on [Unsplash](#)



“Analog gives us the joy of creating and possessing real, tangible things”

David Sax

Teens unplugged!



Photo: West Ada Schools Team Who Must Not Be Named from West Ada– Battle of the Books

“This desire for human interaction — and a sense of community and place — is one of the magnets that draw people to neighborhood ~~bookstores...~~”



libraries

LIBRARY AS CONNECTION CATALYST

Why libraries?

“Why build a library when we have an internet?
Put another way, ‘Why go to a party when I
have food and music at home?’

Internet surfing is largely a solo endeavor.

A library is a shared experience.”*

*Quote: [A Library for All Ages](#); Louie Castoria; Half Moon Bay Review, Aug 22, 2018

Libraries foster social cohesion

- People forge bonds in healthy infrastructure
- Open and inclusive
- Safe space
- Nurture civility
- Cultures of learning, improving self and society

What's
wrong
with this
Picture?



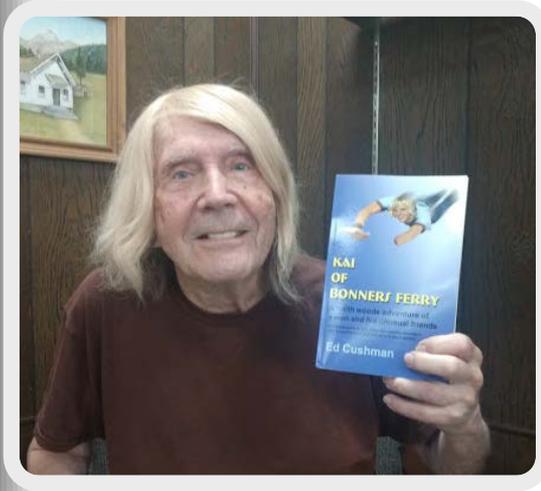
Active, connected learning at the library



DIY becomes DIT (doing it together)

The Human Library at the Twin Falls Public Library





Celebration of
Community at
the Boundary
County Library
via their
Maker Wall

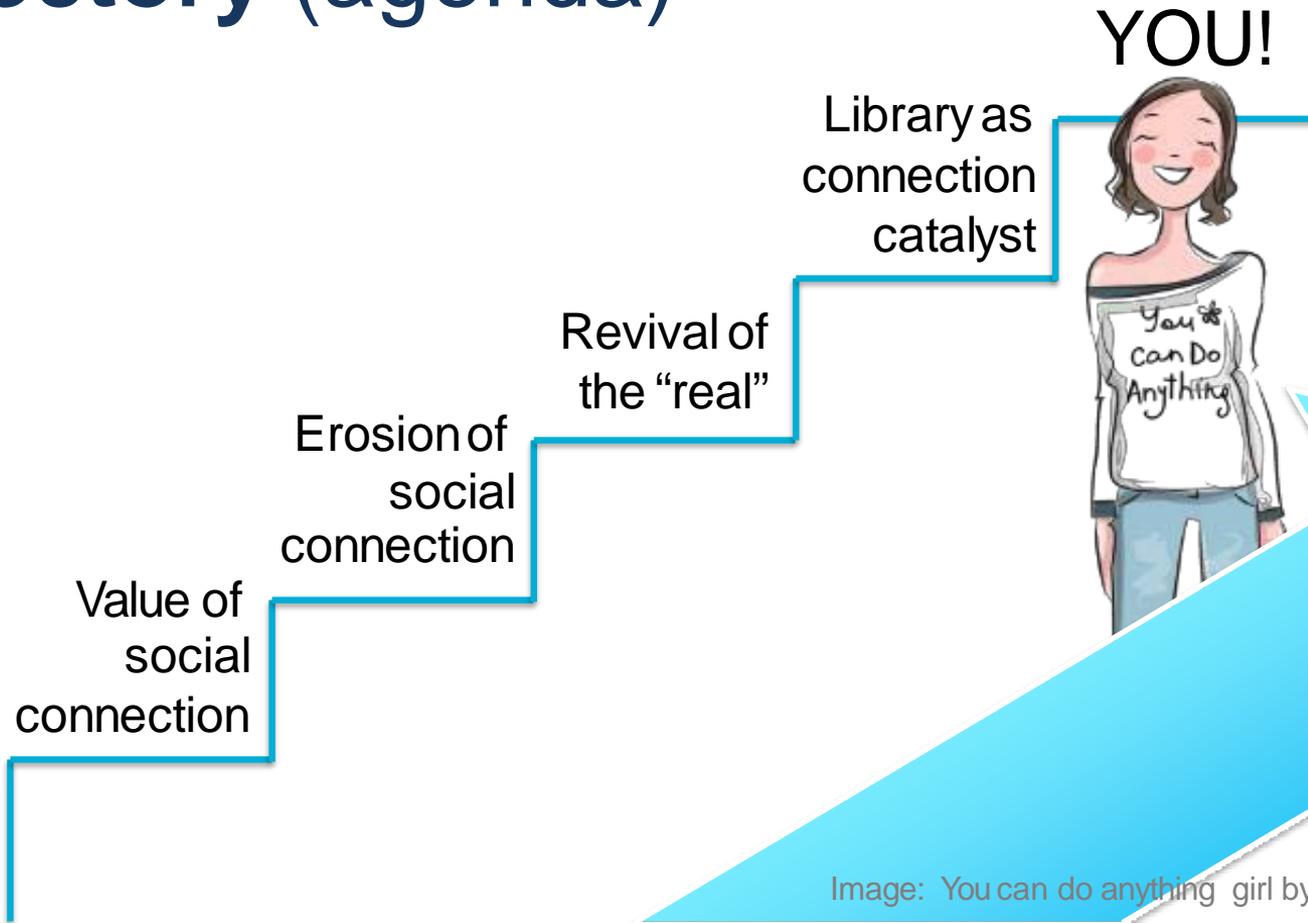
Academic Libraries increase retention



Social connectedness
has a direct
correlation to college
retention rates

Photos: courtesy [University of Idaho Library](#) and [Albertsons Library at Boise State University](#)

Trajectory (agenda)



Possibilities

CHALLENGE

Building on what your library is already doing to enhance social connections, what are some other more intentional ways your library could keep strengthening that role?