

## *Peaceful Readers Book Club*

# *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World* by Vivek Murthy

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# Project Purpose



Increase understanding, collaboration, and community among youth and adults in Calvert County, Maryland by providing civic and social engagement activities with a focus on peace.

Key activities:

- youth & adult peacebuilder preparation courses,
- Peaceful Speakers Series
- Peaceful Readers book club,
- Peaceful Viewers film and discussion night
- Civic Dialogues (library partnership)
- Community service projects



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# Gathering Agreements

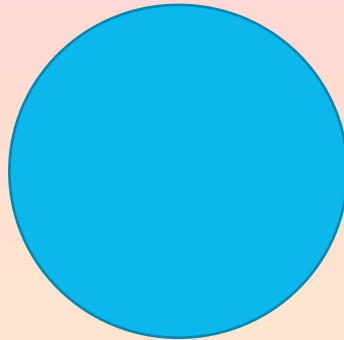
- Any personal information shared in this group is confidential.
- We intend to balance sharing and listening, allowing everyone to participate, and we'll pass whenever we wish.
- We will allow others to speak without interruption.
- We will assume good intentions on everyone's part.
- We will listen attentively.



# Talking in Circles: Personal Reflection

Murthy describes our connections with others by organizing them into “circles.” Think about your relationships in your inner, middle, and outer circles.

- 1.) How do they support you personally?
- 2.) How do you reciprocate and contribute to their wellbeing?



# Discussion Questions

- 1) Dr. Murthy describes a range of strategies and practices that promote community cohesion. Which strategy most strongly resonated with you?
- 2) To what factors do you attribute the loneliness epidemic? Consider the influence of technology, social norms, cultural expectations, and individualism.
- 3) What aspects of your own community do you particularly enjoy? What assets can you identify in your community that could serve as a resource or model for other areas of the country?
- 4) Dr. Vivek Murthy presents social relationships as a vital source of support for one's mental and physical wellbeing. What is one relationship in your life right now that gives you strength? In what ways has it nourished your life and physical and/or mental health?
- 5) The book discusses a variety of cultural practices and perspectives that strengthen community bonds. Do you have any encounters with another culture that changed how you engage in community?
- 6) What is one thing you can do to strengthen a sense of "togetherness" or "communitas" in your community?
- 7) How might you overcome personal barriers that prevent you from connecting with other people? How might you transcend social barriers that inhibit such connections?



# Envisioning Solutions



To address the loneliness epidemic, Dr. Murthy says we will have to ask deeper questions about life, its purpose, and our obligation to one another. What question do you think is part of the solution?



# Suggestions from Vivek Murthy...

•The lessons in *Together* have immediate relevance and application. These four key strategies will help us not only to weather this crisis, but also to heal our social world far into the future.

- 1) Spend time each day with those you love. Devote at least 15 minutes each day to connecting with those you most care about.
- 2) Focus on each other. Forget about multitasking and give the other person the gift of your full attention, making eye contact, if possible, and genuinely listening.
- 3) Embrace solitude. The first step toward building stronger connections with others is to build a stronger connection with oneself. Meditation, prayer, art, music, and time spent outdoors can all be sources of solitary comfort and joy.
- 4) Help and be helped. Service is a form of human connection that reminds us of our value and purpose in life. Checking on a neighbor, seeking advice, even just offering a smile to a stranger six feet away, all can make us stronger.



# Project Contact Information

## Website

[PeaceThroughAction.org/Calvert](https://PeaceThroughAction.org/Calvert)

## Social Media

FB, IG: [@calvertpeaceproject](https://www.facebook.com/calvertpeaceproject)

TW: [@calvertpeace](https://twitter.com/calvertpeace)

[#CalvertPeaceProject](https://www.facebook.com/CalvertPeaceProject) [#PeaceBeginsInCalvert](https://www.facebook.com/PeaceBeginsInCalvert)

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