

# Team Connection Assessment™ Report

Based on the model in the best-selling book,

*Connectable: How Leaders Can Move Teams From Isolated to All In.*

Report Insights for | LessLonely

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

1. The Introduction
2. The Benefits
3. The Framework
4. The Scoring
5. Your Summary
6. Your Results & Recommendations
7. Your Bonus Resources
8. The Thank You
9. The Research

# THE INTRODUCTION



The Team Connection Assessment™ is the first (and only) tool to effectively measure the strength of relationships among a team.

There is a hidden element that is silently and secretly crippling your team's well-being and performance. This assessment exposes the hidden element and provides you a clear action plan to overcome its devastating impacts. What is the hidden element?

## Disconnection and loneliness.

Remote work, advancing technology, and an always-on work culture are fracturing our relationships resulting in deep disconnection. A colossal 72% of global workers feel lonely at least monthly; with 55% saying at least weekly. In the United States alone, over 15 million full-time workers say they are lonely all or most of the time. 82% of full-time workers state social connections are important, with 51% saying it's very important. Additionally, half of CEOs report experiencing feelings of loneliness in their role, and of this group, 61% believe it hinders their performance.

Not only is loneliness unhealthy, but employee productivity, loyalty, collaboration, and engagement all decrease when employees are lonely and disconnected. Improving team connection is good for worker well-being and for business.

## This report will do three things:

1. Score your level of connections with work, the team, and the leader.
2. Identify areas where improvement is needed.
3. Provide a plan to strengthen your team connections.

Your results in this report are backed by research. Professors from Harvard University, the University of Alabama and the University of Canterbury designed and empirically validated the assessment by analyzing more than 600 diverse participants across the globe, ages 18-61 years old, and spanning 18 different industries. Rest assured stronger team connections are in your future.

# THE BENEFITS



Fully connected teams drive better business.

## Disconnected and lonely workers are...

- 7x more likely to be disengaged at work.
- 5x more likely to miss work due to stress or illness.
- 2x as often to think about quitting their job.
- More inclined to believe their work is lower quality.
- More likely to be remote workers.

Create a more connected team using the recommendations in this report and be **rewarded with a more engaged, dependable, loyal, confident, resilient, and productive team.**

Organizations that foster social connection help contribute to an individual's sense of community which in turn can improve the health and happiness of employees. At work we don't switch off our innate social needs. We thrive on interactions with others to be and feel well – psychologically and physiologically.

A worker who is struggling to feel connected might begin to feel distant from other people, leading the person into greater isolation. Therefore, instilling a sense of belonging can protect people from feelings of loneliness and contribute to creating stronger teams.

The Team Connection Assessment™ measures the strength and quality of connections teams have at work, with their teammates, and manager. Then it provides practical strategies for leaders or team members to improve the team's connection resulting in enhanced well-being, boosted belonging, increased performance, and improved retention.

*“Virtually every study of human happiness reveals that satisfying close relationships constitute the very best thing in life; there is nothing people consider more meaningful and essential to their mental and physical well-being than their close relationships with other people.”*

*-Ellen Berscheid, American Psychologist*

## You're in Good Company

Congratulations for taking a crucial step towards a healthier and higher performing team. Awareness is curative. We first must be aware of the issue before we can take steps towards solving it.

While team connection doesn't happen once and work forever, it's a consistent process with big benefits. You're not alone on the journey towards better connected teams. Leaders at the world's most admired companies are also using this resource.

**Marissa Andrada** / Chief Diversity, Inclusion and People Officer at Chipotle Mexican Grill

An indispensable resource for every team member, manager, and leader. A connected team is an inclusive, thriving team. This gives us the much-needed roadmap to a healthier and united workforce whether the team is in-person, fully remote, or hybrid.





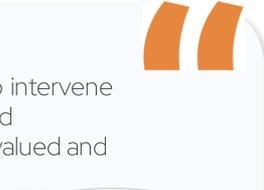
**Michael Arena** / VP Talent & Development at Amazon Web Services (AWS)

It provided us with an engaging, yet practical perspective on how to nurture social connections.



**Melissa Bernstein** / Co-Founder of Melissa & Doug

Utterly groundbreaking. It opened my eyes in ways I wouldn't have imagined. I am now equipped to intervene and turn the tide on loneliness and focus on building a more connected organization with improved engagement. I was moved to proactively make meaningful changes to enable employees to feel valued and a deeper sense of belonging!



**Mariana Fagnilli** / VP, Global Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Liberty Mutual

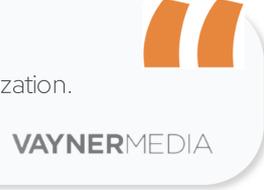
**Insurance**

It provides the tools needed to drive today's global workforce success by helping lessen employees' loneliness and improving their sense of belonging. It helps leaders create connected, driven, and high-performing teams.



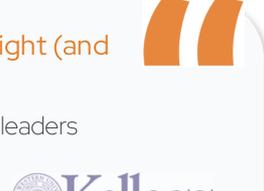
**Claude Silver** / Chief Heart Officer at VaynerMedia

An accessible approach to addressing loneliness at work. Required for any people-focused organization.



**Carter Cast** / Clinical Professor, Kellogg School of Management and author of The Right (and Wrong) Stuff

It does a great job of normalizing a difficult, undiscussed topic and has practical tools that will help leaders reconnect with a disconnected workforce.



**Donna Kimmel** / EVP and Chief People Officer at Citrix

It sparked insights and ideas that I can apply in my team and across our company.



**Jen Fisher** / Chief Well-being Officer at Deloitte

It provides the strategies that managers need to create strong team cultures that encourage connection and belonging. The result is happier, healthier, and more engaged teams!



# THE FRAMEWORK



If you have not yet read the book, *Connectable: How Leaders Can Move Teams From Isolated to All In*, the following pages are included to give you a summary of the Less Loneliness Framework™ that this Assessment and the Recommendations are based upon. This framework will provide you a clear path to move teams from disconnected to connected.

Depending on your assessment scores, the recommendations presented to you in this report will align with one of the stages of this framework. Coupling your understanding of this framework with your results and recommendations will ensure you have a clear path to improve your team connection.

*(If you are familiar with this framework, you can skip ahead to the next section, The Scoring.)*

Workplace loneliness is defined by the distress caused by the perceived inadequacy of a quality connection to teammates, leaders, and the organization itself. Loneliness is the absence of connection, not people. For example, a team member who works remotely but feels connected to the work and their team might experience less loneliness than a team member who works alongside colleagues in an office but lacks a strong connection. Therefore reducing loneliness leads to better connection.

The Less Loneliness Framework™ is the result of two years of research, a 2,000+ global worker survey, and 50 leader interviews. The framework has helped hundreds of organizations boost belonging and strengthen team connection. Each step can be executed virtually or in person.

Think of your team's and your own well-being like the depleting battery of your phone. You don't have a pleasant conversation with someone once and then are recharged forever. Our well-being batteries are always depleting and it takes seeking and establishing meaningful connections to replenish the battery. Much like connecting your phone charger to a power source to increase the battery life, you must connect with others to increase your well-being and protect against an empty battery that is loneliness and isolation.

The framework is a circle to represent that establishing and maintaining healthy connections is a continual process. We don't establish a connection once and are free from disconnection and isolation forever. Like our phone battery, we must continuously reconnect to recharge. This framework includes the steps to get your team reconnected, reengaged, and recharged.

The framework is a four-step process with each step represented by a letter in the word "link." This assessment will help you create stronger links between the people on your team.

# THE LESS LONELINESS FRAMEWORK



## 1. Look at Loneliness: 3 steps to identify loneliness in self and others.

- Look at loneliness.
- Look inward.
- Look outward.

## 2. Invest in Connection: 3 areas to improve the strength of work connections.

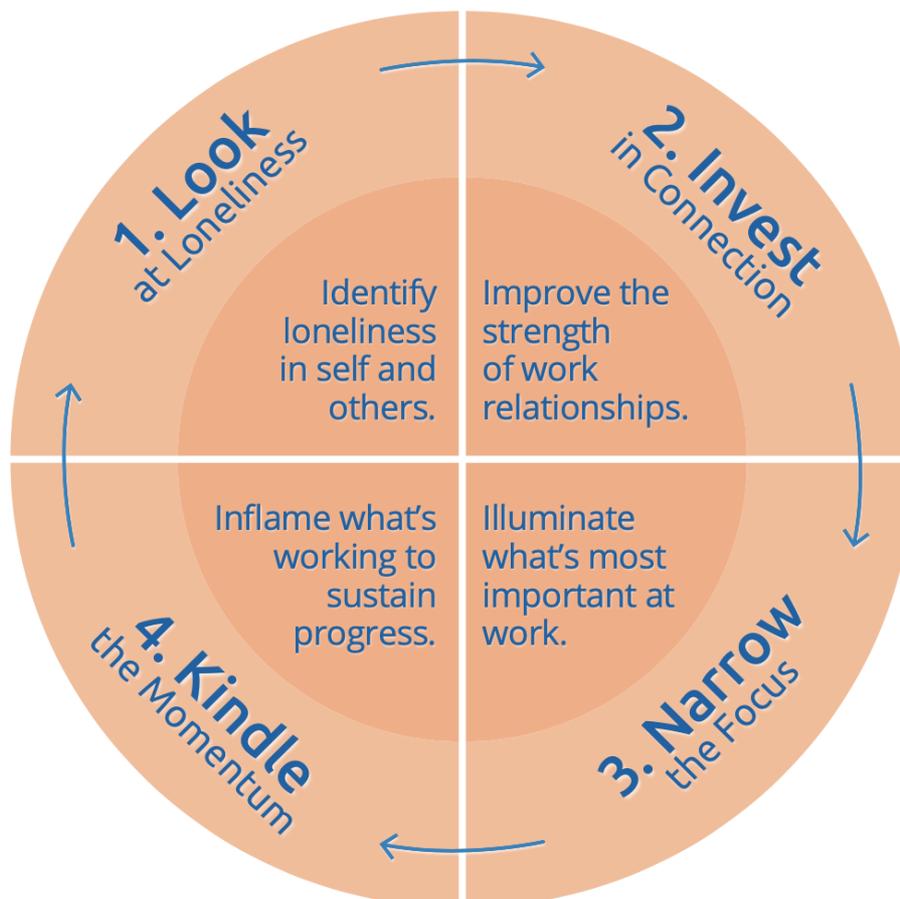
- Invest in safe connections.
- Invest in personal connections.
- Invest in team connections.

## 3. Narrow the Focus: 3 ways to illuminate what's most important at work.

- Narrow the focus on purpose.
- Narrow the focus on clear direction.
- Narrow the focus on growth.

## 4. Kindle the Momentum: 3 actions to inflame what's working to sustain progress.

- Kindle the momentum by re-Looking.
- Kindle the momentum by re-Investing.
- Kindle the momentum by re-Narrowing.



# THE SCORING



Today's smart devices are connectable. You can connect your smartphone to a smart TV, Wi-Fi network, or a charging station. When a device is connected it becomes more powerful, intelligent and useful. A connectable team experiences similar benefits. When workers are connected to the work, their team, and their leader, they are stronger, healthier and more useful. Just like a smartphone was built to connect with other technology. Humans are built to connect with other humans. We are all connectable.

High-quality connections at work are a fundamental building block to creating a sense of belonging at work, and characterized by mutual positive regard, trust, and active engagement on both sides.

Team connection refers to the social ties between people on that team. For the purposes of this report, it is the quality of those ties that matter, rather than the frequency of contact, because relationship quality contributes to well-being in meaningful ways.

## The 3 Scoring Categories

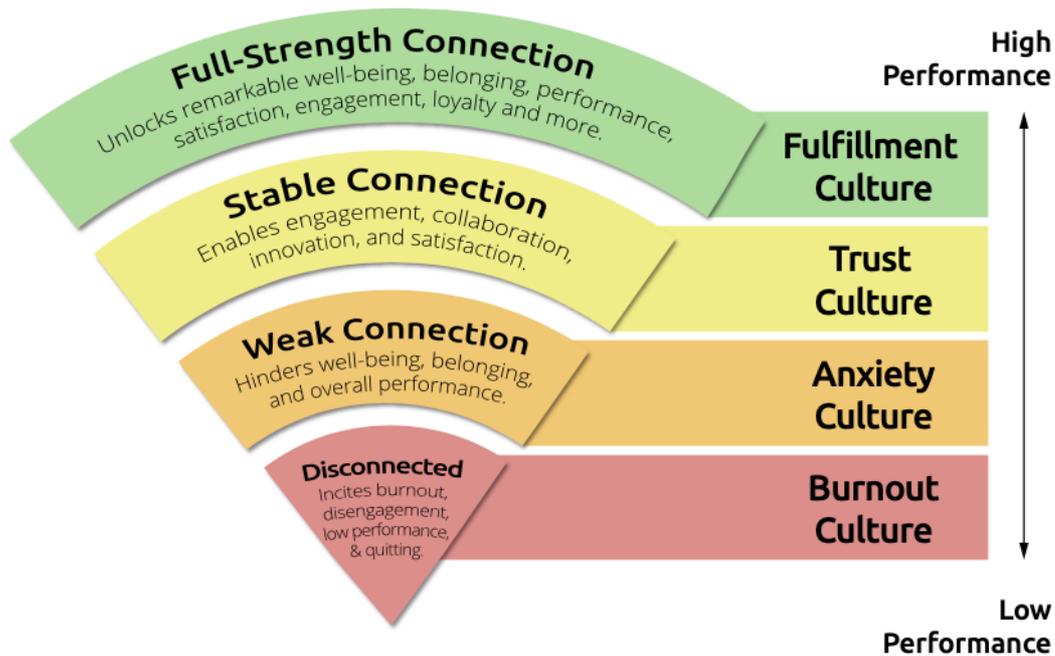
The purpose of this assessment is to determine the level of connection within a team. There are different elements that constitute social connection at work such as trust, belonging, feeling valued, the quality and diversity of social interaction, and mutual social and emotional support. The extensive research behind the Team Connection Assessment™ shows that team support at work falls into three categories:

1. Individual Connection: I feel connected at work.
2. Team Connection: I feel my team is connected.
3. Leader Connection: I feel connected to my leader (or my followers).

*For all of the assessment questions, respondents respond not as they wish they felt, but as they honestly and currently feel within their team.*



## The 4 Levels of Team Connection and Culture™



The following scores apply to all components of connection:

 4.6 – 5.0 = Full-Strength Connection

 1.6 – 3.9 = Weak Connection

 4 – 4.5 = Stable Connection

 1 – 1.5 = Disconnected

**Disconnected** = No to extremely low connection exists making individuals and/or the team highly susceptible to burnout, disengagement, low performance, and quitting.

- Recommendations provided in this category to revolve around the Less Loneliness Framework™ Step #1 Look at Loneliness.

**Weak Connection** = An unstable connection exists among individuals and/or team members hindering well-being, belonging, and overall performance.

- Recommendations provided in this category to revolve around the Less Loneliness Framework™ Step #1 and Step #2 Invest in Connections and possibly Step #3 Narrow the Focus.

**Stable Connection** = A reliable connection exists among individuals and/or team members enabling better engagement, collaboration, innovation, and satisfaction.

- Recommendations provided in this category to revolve around the Less Loneliness Framework™ Step #2 Invest in Connections and Step #3 Narrow the Focus and possibly Step #4 Kindle the Momentum.

**Full-Strength Connection** = A strong connection exists among individuals and team members unlocking the highest levels of well-being, belonging, performance, satisfaction, engagement, loyalty and more.

- Recommendations provided in this category to revolve around the Less Loneliness Framework™ Step #4 Kindle the Momentum.

The healthiest organizations have found a way to have concurrent commitments to human dignity and performance. They don't sacrifice the well-being of employees for high performance. They also don't sacrifice performance to bend to every need of their employees. They strike a balance. Full-strength team connections coupled with high performance creates the healthiest teams and organizational cultures.

# YOUR SUMMARY



Your average team total score for the Team Connection Assessment™ is

2.88

Your overall team connection level is **Weak**

An unstable connection exists which is hindering well-being, belonging, and overall performance.

Focused action on the strategies highlighted in The Recommendations section is suggested.



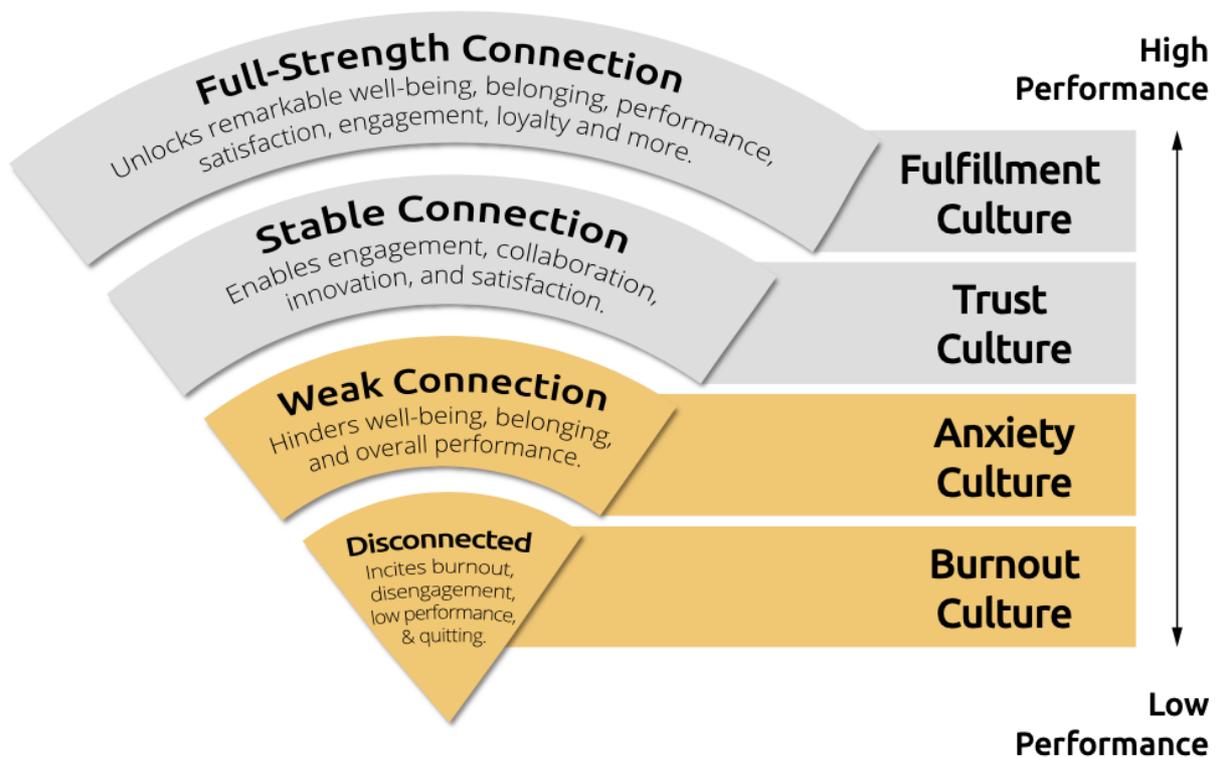
## Recommendation Overview:

The Less Loneliness Framework™ Step #2: Invest In Connections

- The results show a deficiency in a connection among team members and/or the leader then the recommendations provided in this category will be focused on building safe, personal, and team connections.

The Less Loneliness Framework™ Step #3: Narrow the Focus

- The results show a deficiency in a connection to the work then the recommendations provided in this category will be focused on purpose, clear direction, and growth.



# YOUR RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS



In this section, you'll see the responses to each question and the corresponding result in each of the three categories (Individual, Team, and Leader).

Below each category you'll see the recommendations to increase your team connection score based on your overall score. The principal reason why these recommendations are so transformational is that it only takes you. You don't necessarily need to persuade leaders, or get buy-in from your team, or overhaul your company culture. There are subtle shifts you can make today to completely change the well-being of your entire team.

## How to Read Your Results

- **Green is best.** Then yellow, orange, and red being the least desired result.
- **High scores are best.** The higher the score on the 1-5 scale, the stronger the connection.

## Why Taking Action on the Recommendations Matters

According to psychologists, the best way to create connection and lessen loneliness is by using "prosocial behavior." Prosocial behaviors are actions of comforting, sharing, helping or cooperating that are backed by a general concern for the feelings, welfare, and rights of other people. Researchers in China found that leaders who show compassion to their employees can mitigate the negative effects of loneliness and thereby boost creativity. Another study of workers at Coca-Cola's Madrid headquarters found leaders were able to reduce feelings of isolation among their team by simply being nice and interacting with others.

Your behavior lessens loneliness. You don't need medication, day-long centering retreats, meditation apps, or to become a certified therapist. Just small, intentional, and routine behaviors. Executing prosocial behaviors (like the ones you'll read about in the Recommendation section), makes a difference.

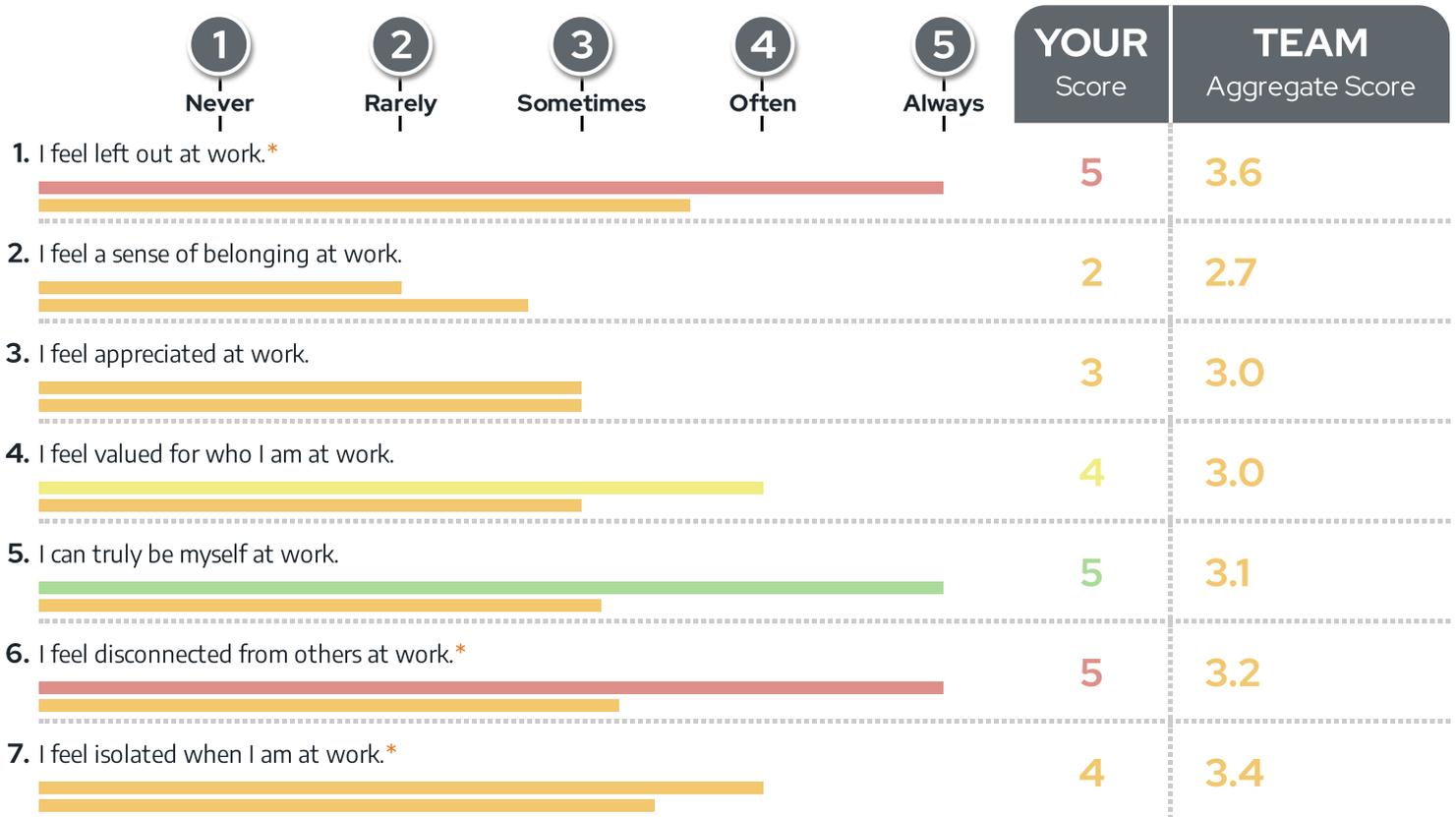
Workers on the receiving end of prosocial behavior were a whopping 278% as likely to engage in prosocial behaviors themselves. Loneliness is contagious, but so are prosocial actions. The ripple effect of lessening loneliness with prosocial behaviors is gigantic. So yes, if your team executes prosocial behaviors, it could ignite similar behaviors throughout your organization and even to the broader world, leading to healthier individuals, stronger families, and more united communities

# CATEGORY #1: YOUR RESULTS



## Individual Connection: Am I connected at work?

The questions in this section asked how you honestly and currently felt about your social relationships at work. Not how you wish you felt. Higher scores indicate higher individual connection to your workplace.



\*Reverse scored: 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, 5=1

Represents a concerning discrepancy between the team's scores and the leader's score. Pay closer attention to the areas where this icon is present.

### TEAM Average

When it comes to your team's individual connection to work, their connection is **WEAK**.

There is an unstable and unreliable connection between your team and the experiences of belonging, appreciation, and community inside the work environment whether in-person or virtual. Because this score indicates a need for improvement, it is recommended that you begin using many of the recommendations in this section.



### YOUR Average

When it comes to your personal connection at work, your connection is **STABLE**.

There is a stable connection between you and the experiences of belonging, appreciation, and community inside your work environment whether in-person or virtual. Because this score indicates a room for improvement, it is recommended that you begin using some of the recommendations in this section.



# CATEGORY #1: YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS



## Individual Connection: *How to improve my connection at work?*



### Recommendation #1: Identify the Beneficiaries of the Labor

#### The WHY:

Research shows cooks are more motivated and work harder when they see those who would be eating their food. Radiologists are more accurate at reading x-rays when shown a picture of the patient. It's easy for individuals on a team to disconnect and disengage when it's unclear who is benefiting from the work they do.

#### The TO-DO:

Take an interrogative approach to understand who exactly is benefiting from the work your team does. When workers can connect a straight line from the work they do to the person(s) benefiting from their labor, purpose follows. And purpose is a premier loneliness suppressant and connection booster.



This technique was recently applied to a company that provides portable toilets to construction sites. Not a sexy job to say the least. In order to strengthen the team's connection with their work, the team took an interrogative approach to understand the specific beneficiaries of their labor. The beneficiaries they identified for a specific job was a family of four in their local community. The team not only provided convenience and comfort to construction workers building a school but they actually enabled speedier construction because the workers didn't have to leave a work site when nature called. So the family of four got to send their kids to the school sooner than anticipated. Being connected to the grateful family of four improved the team's connection at work.



### Recommendation #2: Have a Formula for Feedback

#### The WHY:

A recent study proved that leaders can double performance by injecting high standards and assurance into the feedback they give to their team. Using the right formula when delivering feedback can help connect individuals to their work as well as inspire belief, transform work ethic, and instill confidence.

#### The TO-DO:

Use this feedback formula to get individuals on your team connected to their work: High Standards + Assurance + Direction + Support. Here's how this feedback would sound: "I have high expectations for you. I know you can meet them. Take this new direction. And if you fail, I'll help you recover."



### Recommendation #3: Express Appreciation to a Team Member

#### The WHY:

Expressing appreciation has been proven to be a well-being booster. And it's a top motivator in the workplace. Across 46 years of employee motivation studies, the only one answer that has been cited every time among the top two employee motivators is "appreciation for work done." Extending appreciation to another team member draws you both closer together.

#### The TO-DO:

Tell a team member one thing you appreciate about them. Express your heartfelt and personal gratitude via a phone call, email, text, handwritten note or during an in-person conversation. For bonus points, crystalize the appreciation via a LinkedIn Recommendation. Visit the team member's LinkedIn profile, click More (the button located underneath their profile picture) then Recommend and write a 2-3 sentence appreciative account of what it's like to work with that person. Thinking about that person while you write a recommendation will make you feel more connected to them and them to you when they receive the recommendation.



Bridgestone, a leading tire manufacturer, uses gratitude letters to help people feel seen. In one example, a supervisor named Daniel wrote a gratitude letter to an employee named George. George had successfully completed a special safety project where his work exceeded expectations. In the letter, Daniel highlighted the great work George did and the impact he made. Not long after Daniel delivered the letter, George came into Daniel's office, closed the door, held up the letter and said, "This is the single nicest thing anyone has ever done for me." Daniel's words of appreciation strengthened the connection between the two individuals.



### Recommendation #4: Acknowledge a Team Member's Progress

#### The WHY:

According to research, progress has the greatest impact on employee engagement. Unfortunately due to busyness and heavy work loads, we too often overlook the small opportunities to acknowledge the progress members of our teams are making. Without a consistent awareness of the progress being made, team members become susceptible to disconnecting from the work.

#### The TO-DO:

Point out the progress you've noticed in a team member. Whether it's progress on a project, accomplishing a small win, overcoming an obstacle, learning a new skill, achieving a breakthrough, or completing a goal, give them a virtual or in-person high five.



## Recommendation #5: Prompt Personal Sharing

### The WHY:

When people feel they do not need to hide their true selves at work, they experience more connection at work. Create opportunities for individuals to share aspects of their personal lives with the goal of seeing the human behind the job.

### The TO-DO:

Find ways to prompt personal sharing such as having a bring your kids, pets, or parents to work day, provide a virtual tour of your home office, or carve out five minutes each meeting to have someone share a non-work anecdote.



Vivek Murthy, the 19th and 21st U.S. Surgeon General, created the “Inside Scoop” exercise where his team devoted five minutes once a week during their all-hands meeting where one person would share pictures of anything they wanted as long as it wasn’t related to their current job. One researcher on Murthy’s team was perceived as very detailed oriented and “nerdy” by her colleagues but that changed once they saw the pictures of her marathon training and heard about how she qualified for the U.S. olympic team. She saw herself as an athlete, not just a researcher, and now her colleagues saw that too.



## Bonus Resources

*Building and maintaining strong social connections is a continuous process.*

**Here are some additional resources to help you along your journey.**

- **The Connect Deck™:** 30 simple research-based daily activities to connect you with humanity and your team (in-person or remote). [Click here](#) to grab a deck.
- **The Loneliness Self-Assessment:** Discover your individual loneliness levels and get research-based results and recommendations immediately. [Click here](#) to take the free 2-min assessment.
- **The Case for Connection Podcast:** Listen to the authors of Connectable, Ryan and Steve, discuss the latest loneliness research and practical strategies to strengthen your connections in life. [Click here](#) to listen to the podcast.



## Mental Health Resources

*If you or someone you know is dealing with chronic loneliness, depression, or other mental health issues, use the following free 24/7 support resources.*

- **Crisis Text Line: Text “BRAVE” to 741-741**
  - Text from anywhere, anytime, about any type of crisis. A real-life, trained crisis counselor will receive the text and respond, all from a secure online platform.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
  - Text from anywhere, anytime, about any type of crisis. A real-life, trained crisis counselor will receive the text and respond, all from a secure online platform.

# CATEGORY #2: YOUR RESULTS

## Team Connection: *Is my team connected?*



The questions in this section asked how you honestly and currently felt about your team (or work group or those who you work with on a day-to-day basis). Not how you wish you felt. Higher scores indicate higher levels of team connectedness behaviors.

Leaders were to respond to the questions based on how they thought their team would respond. High and equivalent scores are ideal. The higher the Team Aggregate Scores, the stronger the connections are among the team.

**1**  
Never

**2**  
Rarely

**3**  
Sometimes

**4**  
Often

**5**  
Always

	YOUR Score	TEAM Aggregate Score	
1. There is a sense of community within my team / with my coworkers.	3	2.5	
2. I can express my feelings with my team members/coworkers if I want to.	4	2.8	
3. My team members/coworkers understand and accept me.	5	2.9	⚠
4. Team members/coworkers value my opinion.	1	2.6	
5. There is a sense of togetherness with my team/coworkers.	2	2.6	
6. There are people at work I can turn to when I need support.	3	3.0	
7. People on my team/coworkers give me the support I need, even during times of pressure and stress.	4	3.1	
8. There is a sense of camaraderie with my team/coworkers.	5	2.9	⚠
9. There is a good level of cooperation between team members/coworkers.	1	2.4	
10. I trust my team/coworkers.	2	2.8	
11. I can count on my team members/coworkers to help me with a difficult situation.	3	2.8	
12. I can rely on others at work when I need to.	4	2.8	
13. I can count on my team members/coworkers to help me in a crisis.	5	2.8	⚠

⚠ Represents a concerning discrepancy between the team's scores and the leader's score. Pay closer attention to the areas where this icon is present.

## YOUR Average

When it comes to your perception of how connected your team is with each other, the team's connection is **WEAK**.

There is an unstable and unreliable connection between you and the experiences of belonging, appreciation, and community inside your work environment whether in-person or virtual.

Because this score indicates a need for improvement, it is recommended that you begin using many of the recommendations in this section.

3.23



## TEAM Average

When it comes to your perception of how connected your team is with each other, the team's connection is **WEAK**.

There is an unstable and unreliable connection between your team and the experiences of belonging, appreciation, and community inside the work environment whether in-person or virtual. Because this score indicates a need for improvement, it is recommended that you begin using many of the recommendations in this section.

2.78



# CATEGORY #2: YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS

## Team Connection: How to improve the team's connection?



### Recommendation #1: Start Speaking Last

#### The WHY:

When leaders share their thoughts about a topic and then ask for the team's opinion, it's too late. By speaking first, leaders undermine the dialogue and thwart creativity because the team will be less likely to volunteer any ideas that conflict with the leaders. Speaking last creates more space for every team member to have a voice and cultivate connections through open dialogue.

#### The TO-DO:

Save your thoughts and opinions until after the team has shared their thoughts. Introduce the topic and/or pose a question to the team and then listen intently as they share. Ask follow-up or clarifying questions but don't share your thoughts until enough people have spoken. Encourage team members who are less likely to speak up to share their thoughts.



When asked, "Where did you learn to be a great leader?" Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa, explained that he learned how to be a great leader from his father. His father was a tribal chief. When Nelson was young, he would go with his father... tribal meetings, where he remembered two things. The first was that his father always had his tribal council sit in a circle. The second was that his father was always the last to speak.



### Recommendation #2: Invite into a Compelling Narrative

#### The WHY:

The average run time of the world's top three highest grossing films is 3 hours. If you want to capture the attention of your team, take note from the silver screen and share stories. Technology isn't to blame for distracted and disengaged team members, leaders failing to enchant their teams using a compelling narrative is to blame.

#### The TO-DO:

Nothing squashes loneliness quite like contributing to a worthwhile goal and feeling a part of something bigger than oneself. So invite your team into a compelling narrative by answering the three burning questions (daily, weekly, and monthly) they are secretly asking of you, their leader.

1. What are we doing?
2. Why are we doing it?
3. How do I fit in?



### Recommendation #3: Lead with Context Not Control

#### The WHY:

If mistrust is a big component of loneliness, then building trust is important in making a team less lonely and more connected. One way to build trust is to use context. Control is the opposite of trust. Little trust is present among a team where a leader controls every employee's action and decision. Context on the other hand is providing the team with the necessary information so that they can act and decide on their own. Context builds trust. Trust builds connection.

#### The TO-DO:

Lead with context and not control. High performance people will do better work if they understand the context (the why). If you don't trust your team to take the right actions and make the right decisions after giving the appropriate context, you likely have a hiring problem.



Reed Hastings, the co-founder of Netflix, shared an example of the importance of context in his book, *No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention*. After one of Reed's managers made a poor decision, Reed sat down with the manager and asked why he had made the decision. As the manager shared his thought process for making the decision, Reed realized it was a reasonable decision based on the limited information the manager had. The costly decision could have been avoided if Reed had shared more context about the situation, thus enabling the manager to make the best decision.



### Recommendation #4: Establish Psychological Safety Using Proportional Conversation

#### The WHY:

Teams where a manager spoke 80% of the time (or more) were less successful than teams who practiced equal turn-taking during discussions, or proportional conversation. Teams where every member has equal opportunity to speak and be heard are the most successful. A psychological safe team is a connected team where everyone feels comfortable to speak up, be seen, and heard.

#### The TO-DO:

Ensure every team member feels that they have an equal chance to speak and be heard. Be mindful of talking too much yourself and of team members who speak too much or too little. Encourage every team member to participate. For the introverts on your team, following up after a meeting to get their thoughts is a good practice.

[Click here](#) to watch a short video about what psychological safety is and why it is so important.



## Recommendation #5: Socialize Smarter

### The WHY:

Socializing outside of work (happy hours, company parties, etc.) can improve connection and reduce loneliness. However, group conversations tend to stay shallow and people tend to talk about what they have in common, which is work. One-on-one conversation or doing an activity together is more likely to create deeper connections.

### The TO-DO:

Facilitate activities that draw people out of their shell. The activity must be fun, easy to engage with, and have clear directions. And if you can schedule activities within time the team has already budgeted, such as the standing team weekly meeting, even better.

Some examples of fun activities to do with the team are:

- **Guess Who** = Each person writes down three items people don't know about them, those items are collected, read out loud one by one, and then the team guesses who is who.
- **Charity Challenge** = Volunteer together at a local charity.
- **Scavenger Hunt** = Plan and design a scavenger hunt. Use a service like Goose Chase.



Southern Company Gas, a Fortune 500 energy services company, uses an activity called "speed dating" during their corporate training events in order to strengthen team connections. The team splits into two groups and forms an inner circle and outer circle with people facing each other. The group has a few minutes to ask prepared personal questions of the person standing in front of them. Questions like, "What does your perfect day consist of?," "What job would you stink at and why?," "What would you most be famous for, why?" After a few minutes, the inner circle rotates one person to their left, and asks the same questions again, this time to a completely different individual. The fun and formal structure of the exercise ensures the team is interacting with multiple people and building connections along the way.



For professionally designed and facilitated team events check out Sync Learning Experiences (LX), a premier training consultancy with a focus on team dynamics.



## Bonus Resources

*Building and maintaining strong social connections is a continuous process.*

**Here are some additional resources to help you along your journey.**

- **The Connect Deck™**: 30 simple research-based daily activities to connect you with humanity and your team (in-person or remote). [Click here](#) to grab a deck.
- **The Loneliness Self-Assessment**: Discover your individual loneliness levels and get research-based results and recommendations immediately. [Click here](#) to take the free 2-min assessment.
- **The Case for Connection Podcast**: Listen to the authors of Connectable, Ryan and Steve, discuss the latest loneliness research and practical strategies to strengthen your connections in life. [Click here](#) to listen to the podcast.

# CATEGORY #3: YOUR RESULTS



## Leader Connection: *Am I connected to my leader (or followers)?*

The questions in this section asked about your working relationship with your immediate leader—the person who most immediately supervises you and to whom you are responsible for your work. Higher scores indicate higher levels of connection to your supervisor.

Leaders were to respond to the questions based on how they thought their team would respond. High and equivalent scores are ideal. The higher the Team Aggregate Scores, the stronger the connections between team members and their leader.

	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always	YOUR Score	TEAM Aggregate Score	
1. My supervisor encourages me to give my best.						1	2.6	
2. My supervisor listens when I need to talk about my work/work issues.						2	2.8	
3. My supervisor helps me with difficult tasks or situations at work.						3	2.8	
4. My supervisor shows appreciation for the work I do.						4	2.9	
5. My supervisor provides good development opportunities.						5	2.8	
6. My supervisor communicates effectively with the team/coworkers.						1	2.3	
7. I am comfortable going to my supervisor whenever I need support.						2	2.8	
8. My supervisor provides helpful feedback and/or coaching in my work.						3	3.1	
9. I trust my supervisor.						4	3.3	

Represents a concerning discrepancy between the team's scores and the leader's score. Pay closer attention to the areas where this icon is present.

## YOUR Average

When it comes to the leader connection, the leader and follower(s) connection is **WEAK**.

There is an unstable and unreliable connection between the leader and follower(s). There is a general lack of encouragement, support, appreciation, development, communication, trust, coaching, and psychological safety. Because this score indicates a need for improvement, it is recommended that you begin using many of the recommendations in this section.

2.78



## TEAM Average

When it comes to the leader connection, the leader and follower(s) connection is **WEAK**.

There is an unstable and unreliable connection between the leader and follower(s). The team has identified a general lack of encouragement, support, appreciation, development, communication, trust, coaching, and psychological safety. Because this score indicates a need for improvement, it is recommended that you begin using many of the recommendations in this section.

2.81



# CATEGORY #3: YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS



**Leader Connection:** *How to improve my connection with my leader (or followers)?*



## Recommendation #1: Seek Solitude

### The WHY:

Aloneness can lessen loneliness. Solitude is insurance against loneliness and is a leader's first line of defense in protecting against loneliness in oneself and ultimately their team. When solitude is done right, it helps to strengthen the connection with ourselves which in turn equips us to connect more with others. Solitude is a state of being alone without the negative emotions of loneliness. It's peaceful aloneness created by a state of voluntary isolation. Solitude is found by isolating one's mind from the inputs of other minds in order to freely process or ponder. Essentially, you can experience solitude amid a crowded coffee shop if your thinking is self-directed instead of reacting to the outside environment. Solitude provides the necessary margin for leaders to recalibrate, think clearly, prioritize, plan, and recharge. Loneliness will empty a person, solitude, on the other hand, can fill a person up. The greater the noise, the greater need for solitude. The demands of life and business today are deafening. That's why solitude doesn't come easy. There is always something more, urgent, and loud that will steal your attention. You have to fight for it.

### The TO-DO:

Seek solitude. Solitude can happen in a few moments or a few months. It can also take many forms, such as self-reflection, journaling, meditation, mindfulness exercises, brainstorming, or business strategy sessions. It can even be as simple as taking a few quiet, social-media-free minutes to just be with your wandering thoughts. Get over any fears of being alone with your thoughts. Abandon any feelings that seeking solitude is selfish. There isn't anything selfish about rising above the noise, gaining a grander vision of the future, and leading a team to that preferred destination. Seeking time alone is healthy. It is required for leaders to be effective. You owe it to your team to remove yourself from the day-to-day noise, find the higher ground that allows you to clearly see the destination, and then think in the stillness to craft the plan to get the team there.

*"The best thinking has been done in solitude."* -Thomas Edison



## Recommendation #2: Guide on the Side

### The WHY:

Since information has been decentralized and now accessible in the palm of a hand, a top-down approach to leadership is irrelevant. Leaders instead now need to guide their team from the side... coaching them through their learnings, successes and failures.

### The TO-DO:

Guide on the side by adopting a coaching style of leadership. The essence of coaching is to (1) resist advice giving and (2) ask more questions. Instead of always telling your team what to do, ask them thoughtful questions to help them arrive at the right answers themselves. This will help them to become more dependent, confident, and capable team members.



### Recommendation #3: Consider Relatability Over Vulnerability

#### The WHY:

As a leader, if you're unable to create a caring connection with your team, you create a culture of concealment. People hold back, walk on eggshells, and are constantly in their head--wondering, questioning, second guessing and not producing useful work. If leaders fail to clearly share what they are experiencing at work, it sends the message to the team that certain topics are off limits. This creates eggshells for the team because the leader is not being explicit about what is on or off limits. The team is left to assume it's all off limits because the leader is not clearly and transparently communicating. When you fully compartmentalize work and life, you send the signal that everyone has to compartmentalize and those that don't compartmentalize aren't safe. Also, when you don't share, people might begin to wonder if they are as close to you as they thought. Because if they were, you would have shared something. Or if they have something to share, they won't do it. Thus, quality connections are stunted.

#### The TO-DO:

Emotional intelligence seems to be inextricably linked to vulnerability. While vulnerability can be a valuable tool, too often—for leaders especially—it can position someone as weak and erode confidence among a team. Leaders should instead strive for relatability. By definition, being relatable establishes a social or sympathetic relationship with others. Asking “Am I relatable?” or “What’s it like to be on the other side of me?” forces you to consider the circumstances of the person you’re interacting with which creates an opportunity to empathize.

“Sometimes you need to be brave enough to be vulnerable,” says Shandee Bowman, Director of People Experience & Culture at Crowley, a 129-year-old supply chain logistics services company. At a recent Crowley all-hands meeting, a supervisor leaned into reliability and shared that he had been feeling lonely. Bowman said that as soon he mentioned the word “lonely,” the entire group unanimously nodded their heads in understanding. A team member in the meeting even had tears well up in her eyes. She messaged in the chat forum, “You just described exactly what I have been feeling, but could not articulate.”

CROWLEY  
People Who Know



### Recommendation #4: Promote Work-Life Balance

#### The WHY:

Employees are less lonely among employers that promote good work-life balance and when they can “leave work at work.” Work-life balance should be pursued and consistently reevaluated by any organization. Too much work can leave people feeling isolated from those in their personal lives. Too much work can leave people feeling isolated from those in their personal lives.

#### The TO-DO:

Support volunteering, encourage vacations, offer childcare, or extend parental leave are all examples of how organizations can help team members strike better work-life balance.

Meta and IKEA recently began offering new parents (mothers and fathers) four months of paid baby leave. Basecamp, a web application company based in Chicago, pays for employees' hobbies. Mattel, Inc., the toy manufacturing company, offers employees up to 16 paid hours off to participate in their kids' school events. Airbnb, the community-driven hospitality company, provides employees with \$2,000 a year for spending on Airbnb properties anywhere in the world. JPMorgan Chase recently joined other Wall Street banks in telling its employees to take weekends off in order to improve their work-life balance. Burton, a snowboarding outfitter, provides employees the day off to hit the slopes if two feet of snow falls in 24 hours. REI, the retail and outdoor recreation services company, offers an employee challenge grant where employees get \$300 in products for an outdoor activity, as long as it's a challenge like backpacking in the High Sierras, running a marathon in Thailand, etc.



## Recommendation #5: Leverage Learning

### The WHY:

Learning gives us a sense that tomorrow can be better than today. Learning lifts the human spirit by providing hope. When our brain is enraptured in learning something new, loneliness is absent. Acquiring in-demand skills makes us feel strong, superhuman, and confident. While the mind feeds, loneliness starves.

### The TO-DO:

Establish a once a month lunch and learn. Choose one person each month who will lead the team through a learning session. The person can show a YouTube video, discuss a book that was read, demonstrate a skill, etc.



Pamay Bassegy, Chief Learning Officer at Kraft Heinz, told us that she recently launched a daily learning challenge as a corporate initiative. The challenge encouraged employees to take risks and proactively look for ways to learn. More than 1,000 employees have committed to learning one new thing per day.



## Bonus Resources

*Building and maintaining strong social connections is a continuous process.*

**Here are some additional resources to help you along your journey.**

- **The Book:** *Connectable: How Leaders Can Move Teams From Isolated to All In* is the world's first book to address workplace loneliness. [Click here](#) to grab your copy.
- **Social Media (@RyanAndSteven):** Follow the world's #1 workplace loneliness thought leaders for more insights on creating stronger team connections: [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#).

# YOUR BONUS RESOURCES



The Team Connection Assessment™ is brought to you by LessLonely.com, the world's premier resource to reduce isolation and improve connections. Here are additional resources to help boost connection and lessen loneliness within yourself or a team.



## ◆ Hire a Team Connection Speaker or Consultant

- Work with the world's leading experts on team connection and the authors that literally wrote the book on creating connectable teams and lessening loneliness at work.

BOOK A SPEAKER



## ◆ *Connectable: How Leaders Can Move Teams From Isolated to All In*

- The world's first book to address workplace loneliness.

BUY THE BOOK



## ◆ The Connectable Course

- 8 interactive and immersive 10-15min modules to help lessen loneliness and strengthen connections with a team, manager, and organization.

ACCESS COURSE



## ◆ The Connect Deck™

- 30 simple research-based daily activities to connect you with humanity and your team (in person or remote). Grab a deck for yourself or your whole team.

BUY THE DECK



## ◆ The Case for Connection Podcast

- Listen to the authors of Connectable, Ryan and Steve, discuss the latest loneliness research, how it applies to them as an introvert and extrovert, and practical strategies to strengthen your connections in life.

LISTEN TO PODCAST



## ◆ The Loneliness Self-Assessment

- Discover your individual loneliness levels and get research-based results and recommendations immediately.

TAKE ASSESSMENT



## ◆ Social Media (@RyanAndSteven)

- Follow the world's #1 workplace loneliness thought leaders for more insights on creating stronger team connections: [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#).



## ◆ The Connectable App

- Discover your individual loneliness levels and get research-based results and recommendations immediately.

GET THE APP

# MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



If you or someone you know is dealing with chronic loneliness, depression, or other mental health issues, use the following free 24/7 support resources.

- **Crisis Text Line: Text "BRAVE" to 741-741**
  - Text from anywhere, anytime, about any type of crisis. A real-life, trained crisis counselor will receive the text and respond, all from a secure online platform.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
  - Call from anywhere. You will be routed to the closest crisis center in your area. Call for yourself or someone you care about. Your call is free and confidential.

# THE THANK YOU



Thanks for taking the Team Connection Assessment™. More importantly, thanks for prioritizing the connections of your team because together we can achieve so much more.

In early 2019, we discovered research that highlighted that 73% of Gen Z workers reported sometimes or always feeling alone. Surprised and saddened by that number, we began exploring what was causing this loneliness. As we began our research, it became clear that it wasn't just Gen Z who were experiencing loneliness, but everyone was.

Considering there weren't any resources to help organizations lessen worker loneliness, we decided to create it. Loneliness isn't shameful, it's a signal. A signal we belong together. And we believed the best place to tackle the loneliness epidemic was at the place we convene the most, work. And leaders were best positioned to cultivate more belonging among their teams.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we began sharing our loneliness research with clients and were astonished by how large the appetite was for this topic. The pandemic had finally pulled back the curtain on the concealed topic of loneliness. Two years, one book, two frameworks, an app, and a team connection assessment later we are thrilled to see how accessible this topic has become for organizations big and small all over the world.

Moving your team from isolated to all in requires less than you might expect. What it does require is vigilance. A consistent mentality of zero tolerance for a lonely workforce. Every person on your team is one person away from a stronger sense of belonging. Might you be that person to deliver for them?

We must continue to fight for more belonging, because if not we will continue to fracture apart. Instead of banding together to solve important problems, we'll retreat into isolation growing ill, bitter, and unfulfilled. Building stronger teams and stronger companies will require action. Action from you. Action from me. Action from all of us. You can only control yourself, so start there.

Whether you're a leader or not, you've probably wanted to disconnect from people. At times, the issues of the team seem too complex and daunting, and you'd rather retreat into the wilderness on your own. That's okay. You're allowed to feel that way. Besides, solitude is healthy. Just don't go too far. Your team needs you. And you need them.

Together we heal. Together we perform better. Together we belong.

Here's to stronger teams,

**Ryan Jenkins**

Co-Founder of [LessLonely.com](https://www.LessLonely.com)

**Steve Van Cohen**

Co-Founder of [LessLonely.com](https://www.LessLonely.com)

# THE RESEARCH



The team at LessLonely.com collaborated with leading global researchers from Harvard University, the University of Alabama, and the University of Canterbury in New Zealand to develop and validate the Team Connection Assessment™.

Items were generated from various relationship theories relevant to organizations (e.g. *high quality relationships, social support, relationship satisfaction/quality, loneliness, isolation, social disconnectedness*) and existing measures. These items were then tested by subject matter experts to ensure each item was measuring connection and relevant to the workplace. 600 participants were recruited via Prolific to test the validity and reliability of the items. All participants were employed full-time or part-time, had jobs that required interaction with coworkers, worked in at least one team/work group, and had a direct supervisor to whom they reported.

Items were presented randomly to participants to avoid predetermined 'conceptual clustering.' Attention checks and Recaptcha scores ensured that humans were completing the survey and they were paying attention when doing so; as a result only two datasets were removed. Negatively worded items were reverse-scored so that higher scores on the scale represented higher connection.

## Demographics of the Respondents:

- **Gender:** Female 55%, Male 44%, Non-binary 1%
- **Age range:** 18–61 years
- **Age average:** 32.4 years
- **Age Standard Deviation:** 9.2 years
- **Geographical region:** North America 45%, UK/Europe 20%, Central and South America 12%, Asia 12%, India/Pakistan 6%, Africa 3%, Oceania 2%

## Industry Affiliation of Respondents:



There were no statistically significant differences between genders on the Team Connection Assessment™ components. Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences between industry type and Team Connection Assessment™ components. This means when conducting the survey across a diverse group of genders and industry type, the analyses can be collated and the results do not need to be analyzed separately for each gender group or each industry group.