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Friends help you live longer

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17 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Friends help you live longer

BNE: New research suggests that having good friends in old age may be more important for longevity than having close family ties. This is according to a study published in the *British Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health** on June 16. Researchers interviewed 1,500 Australians over the age of 70 about their social and family relations. Findings indicated that affiliations with close friends improved chances of survival beyond ten years by 22 per cent. This was attributed to the positive physiological effects on the body of increased recreation and social activity. The researchers proposed that the beneficial feelings experienced by the septuagenarians because of their friends was the antithesis to the negative effects that stress has on our well-being.

The researchers analyzed data gathered from the Australian Longitudinal Study of Aging, which began in 1992. This study aimed to gauge how a range of behavioral, economic, environmental and social factors affected the constitution of the test group of 70-year-olds. The senior citizens were monitored annually for the first four years of the ten-year-long study and at three-yearly intervals thereafter. The team found that those with the strongest network of friends and confidants were less likely to die by the end of the ten-year period. This was consistent even after factoring in other variables such as the death of a spouse, financial upheavals or other traumatic events. The message is to keep in touch if you want to live longer.

* <http://jech.bmjournals.com/>

“The effect of social networks on 10-year survival in very old Australians: the Australian Longitudinal Study of Ageing.”

Lynne C Giles, Gary FV Glonek, Mary A Luszcz, Gary R Andrews

Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 2005. 59:574-579

WARM-UPS

1. FRIENDS: In pairs / groups, talk about your friends. This may help you:

- Oldest friend
- Newest friend
- Best friend
- Funniest friend
- Pen friend
- Foreign friend
- Richest friend
- Kindest friend
- How we met.
- How long ago we met.
- Why he/she is special.
- How often we see each other.
- How he/she makes you feel.
- How long you think you'll stay friends.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Good friends / old age / family ties / recreation / social activity / septuagenarians / network of friends / financial upheavals / traumatic events

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. OLD AGE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with friends. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. SENIOR BUDDIES: Talk with your partner(s) about whether you think these statements are true or false for you about friendship in old age.

- a. I'll have more friends when I'm 70 than I have now.
- b. I'll see my friends every day when I'm in my seventies.
- c. When I'm old, my friends will be more important to me than they are now.
- d. I'll argue a lot less with my friends when we're old.
- e. I'd rather be surrounded by family than friends when I'm old.
- f. I'll still be making new friends even in my seventies.
- g. All of the friends I have now will still be friends when I'm 70.
- h. I'm looking forward to being 70 and talking to my friends.

5. PLANS FOR 70: Which of these things would you like to do with your friends when you reach your seventies? Talk about how different these things might be at 70.

- Hiking
- Bungy jumping
- Study English
- Travel around the world
- Bingo
- Ballroom dancing
- Go on dates
- Talk about the old days

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Research says friends are more important for longevity than family. | T / F |
| b. A study was conducted on 1,500 British septuagenarians. | T / F |
| c. Good friends can help you live 22 years longer. | T / F |
| d. Good friendships have the opposite effect on the body that stress has. | T / F |
| e. A group of 70-year-olds was studied for a period of 10 years. | T / F |
| f. The group was monitored annually over the 10-year test period. | T / F |
| g. The death of a spouse greatly affected the test data. | T / F |
| h. The message is to keep in touch with friends for a longer life. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| a. longevity | assess |
| b. affiliations | put down to |
| c. attributed to | turmoil |
| d. septuagenarians | associations |
| e. antithesis | friends |
| f. gauge | 70-79-year-olds |
| g. constitution | long life |
| h. confidants | painful |
| i. upheavals | opposite |
| j. traumatic | health |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. New research | gathered from ... |
| b. close | with close friends |
| c. affiliations | the negative effects |
| d. positive physiological | family ties |
| e. was the antithesis to | in other variables |
| f. analyzed data | intervals thereafter |
| g. affected the constitution | suggests |
| h. at three-yearly | of the test group |
| i. factoring | effects on the body |
| j. financial | upheavals |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WORD ORDER: Put the underlined words back into the correct order.

Friends help you live longer

BNE: New research suggests that having old friends good in age may be more important for longevity than ties close having family. This is according to a study published in the British Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health on June 16. Researchers interviewed 1,500 Australians over the age of 70 about their social and family relations. Findings with that affiliations indicated close friends improved chances of survival beyond ten years by 22 per cent. This was physiological to positive the attributed effects on the body of increased recreation and social activity. The researchers proposed that the beneficial feelings experienced by the septuagenarians because of their friends was the negative antithesis to the effects that stress has on our well-being.

The researchers gathered data analyzed from the Australian Longitudinal Study of Aging, which began in 1992. This study aimed to range how a gauge of behavioral, economic, environmental and social factors affected the constitution of the test group of 70-year-olds. The senior citizens were monitored annually for the first four years of the ten-year-long study intervals at three-yearly and thereafter. The team found that those with the strongest network of friends and confidants die likely were to less by the end of the ten-year period. This was consistent variables after other factoring even in such as the death of a spouse, financial upheavals or other traumatic events. The message is to keep in touch if you want to live longer.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'family' and 'tie'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WORD ORDER: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT OLD AGE SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about friendship and old age.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- longevity
- interviewed
- survival
- 22 per cent
- recreation
- antithesis
- data
- constitution
- annually
- network
- upheavals
- in touch

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Were you surprised by this headline?
- b. What do you think of this new study?
- c. Do you agree with the study that friends are more important than family to help you live longer?
- d. Would you rather be surrounded by friends or family at 70?
- e. Do you like reading about studies such as this?
- f. Are you worried about old age?
- g. Do you think life is less stressful for seniors?
- h. Do you think friendships between 70-year-olds are stronger than those between younger friends?
- i. Will life be good when you're 70?
- j. Do the old people you know have wonderful friendships?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. Are you looking forward to your seventies?
- c. Do you think you'll have lots of good friends when you're 70?
- d. What recreational and social activities do you expect to be doing in your seventies?
- e. Do you think life will be exciting at the age of 70?
- f. Will you have a party for your 70th birthday?
- g. What hobbies or interests will you continue into your seventies?
- h. Will you still be studying English when you're 70?
- i. When you're 70, do you think you'll still have ambitions?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

FAMILY OR FRIENDS: In pairs / groups, talk about whether you prefer to do / spend the following activities / occasions with family or friends. Do you think this will change when you are in your seventies?

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>FAMILY OR FRIENDS (NOW)</u>	<u>FAMILY OR FRIENDS (IN MY 70s)</u>
Shopping		
Birthdays		
Go to the movies		
Overseas vacations		
Go to restaurants		
Chat on the phone		
Visit a doctor for a health check		
Christmas, Ramadan, Diwali, Hanukkah or similar religious event		
E-mail		
Other _____		
Other _____		
Other _____		

Change partners and explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s).

Talk about whether you will still be doing/celebrating the activities/occasions when you're in your seventies and what difference being older will make.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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The researchers analyzed data gathered from the Australian Longitudinal Study of Aging, which began in 1992. This study _____ a range of behavioral, economic, environmental and social factors _____ of the test group of 70-year-olds. The senior citizens were _____ for the first four years of the ten-year-long study and at _____. The team found that those with the strongest network of friends and confidants were less likely to die by the end of the ten-year period. This was consistent _____ other variables such as the death of a spouse, financial _____ events. The message is to keep in touch if you want to live longer.

HOMEWORK

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. OLD AGE:** Search the Internet and find more information on life for 70-year-olds. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.
- 3. MY SEVENTIES:** Write an essay on what you think life will be like when you are in your seventies. Explain the main changes you expect to take place in your life. Tell these to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone anticipate similar changes?
- 4. DIARY / SCHEDULE:** Imagine you are 79 years old. Write the entry in your diary / journal for one day in your life. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. T e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| a. longevity | long life |
| b. affiliations | associations |
| c. attributed to | put down to |
| d. septuagenarians | 70-79-year-olds |
| e. antithesis | opposite |
| f. gauge | assess |
| g. constitution | health |
| h. confidants | friends |
| i. upheavals | turmoil |
| j. traumatic | painful |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. New research | suggests |
| b. close | family ties |
| c. affiliations | with close friends |
| d. positive physiological | effects on the body |
| e. was the antithesis to | the negative effects |
| f. analyzed data | gathered from ... |
| g. affected the constitution | of the test group |
| h. at three-yearly | intervals thereafter |
| i. factoring | in other variables |
| j. financial | upheavals |

WORD ORDER:

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