

# Friends can be good medicine.

"Social Support" is the term used to describe positive interactions among people. It is the evidence that someone out there cares about you... and that you care about someone else.

Social support is getting a lot of attention these days because of the new evidence that shows its profound impact on our mental and physical well-being. Most of us have experienced the positive influence friends and family have on resolving our mental anxieties and depressions. Now the new research shows that there is also a correlation between the quality of our relationships and our physical well-being.

The case for social support has been made in a variety of recent scientific studies that document the mental and physical health implications of social support. In one investigation of older people, researchers found that having a confidant significantly helped people avoid psychiatric symptoms. In a large study of approximately 7000 California adults between the ages of 30-59, a strong correlation between social "connectedness" and length of life was documented. Other investigations have demonstrated a dramatic interplay between stressful life changes and health when undergone in the relative absence of social support.

Finally, more evidence for social support comes from comparative health statistics that consistently show an excessive death rate and higher rates of numerous diseases among single, divorced and widowed people as compared to a married population.

While social isolation appears to be a predisposing condition for health deterioration, the result of integrating friends into our lives is enhanced well-being.

Help! I need somebody.  
Help! Not just anybody.  
Help! I need someone. Help!


When I was younger, so much younger than today,  
I never needed anybody's help in any way.  
But now these days are gone, I'm not so self-assured,  
Now I find I've changed my mind, I've opened up the doors.

Help me if you can, I'm feeling down,  
and I do appreciate you being 'round.  
Help me get my feet back on the ground.  
Won't you please, please help me?

And now my life has changed in oh, so many ways,  
My independence seems to vanish in the haze.  
But ev'ry now and then I feel so insecure,  
I know that I just need you like I've never done before.

JOHN LENNON  
PAUL McCARTNEY

## PRESCRIPTION

DATE	May 3, 1985		
NAME	College Student	AGE	20
ADDRESS	University of Oregon		
Rx	Laughter !!!		
<small>This prescription written by</small>	M.D.	Dr. Wellness	
	Address	Health Center	
<small>Pharm. # 177</small>	DEA No.	686 4441	

## SMILE!

Can people really smile their troubles away? That's what one study suggests. The authors found that just posing the facial muscles into characteristic expressions of happiness (without even thinking happy thoughts) can trigger the same nervous system effects that occur when people are actually feeling happy. And conversely, "putting on" a sad, fearful, or angry face will produce the heart-rate and skin temperature changes that are associated with negative emotions.

So, it seems that smiling really is good for your health. (Science, Sept. 1983)

Photo by Lionel De-

