

Eat Lunch at Your Workplace

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By: Justin Gasper, Contributing Columnist

The New England Journal of Medicine found that “patients classified as being socially isolated and having a high degree of life stress have more than four times the risk of death.”

If you don’t have enough meaningful relationships, the grim reaper is always looking for someone to be friends with. Healthy eating and exercise are both important, but living well also means having fulfilling relationships with other people. One of the most obvious ways that people actively choose to disengage from the people around them is during their lunch break.

Perhaps your lunch break seems the perfect opportunity to check your Facebook, text your friends or watch YouTube videos of baby sloths crying adorably. All of these things are undoubtedly very important, but even more important is physically talking to the people around you. Developing relationships with your coworkers outside of the necessary tasks you accomplish can have a lot of benefits.

Right Management, a business consulting group, found that “65 percent of Americans eat lunch at their desks or don’t take a break at all.” Productive workers know how to manage stress well — they take large stressful tasks and complete them

efficiently. The primary way that most people relieve stress is by interacting with other people. Step away from the screen awhile to decompress so that you will be prepared for work after lunch.

Connecting with peers over lunch is a great way to discuss things that are not work-related. Maybe one of your coworkers is chowing down on some Louisiana dirty rice and you ask him for the recipe, or maybe you can casually drop how the yoga place in town is making you so much more zen.

Michael Muhney, a developer that invented contact management software for IBM, discusses how using the closest connections in your social network can lead to huge gains in the work place. Individual conversations are the gold mine of time investment; status updates on Facebook are worth pennies. Lunch breaks represent serious quality time in gaining the trust of your coworkers and presents a perfect opportunity to listen to what makes them tick.

Relationships require time, energy, and a lot of patience, but you get out what you put in. Maybe you are eating healthy and exercising, but have you had any meaningful conversations today? It’s good for your health.

HopeSource is a Community Action agency, and Community Action is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.