

# Lonely people have unconstructive attitudes

By JOHN EBERLEE  
Lonely people's attitudes may be preventing them from forming satisfying relationships, says a Thunder Bay psychologist.

Dr. Ken Rotenberg, an associate professor at Lakehead University, suggests lonely people are less trusting and more cynical than non-lonely people. Moreover, they're less accepting of people who "escalate the level of intimacy" during casual conversations.

These traits would appear to stand in the way of them establishing and maintaining friendships, he says. People who assume others won't fulfill promises to meet for drinks or a movie, for example, may be prone themselves to avoiding such social situations.

Similarly, people who dislike others for baring their souls without an invitation may lack

the necessary skills to make close friends out of casual acquaintances.

Lonely people's unconstructive attitudes were revealed in a survey using subjects selected from among 586 introductory psychology students. Rotenberg identified the most and least lonely individuals in this group by having everyone fill out the "UCLA Loneliness Scale," a questionnaire that measures people's satisfaction with their relationships.

In one study, he compared the behaviour of lonely and non-lonely female students while playing 'Prisoner's Dilemma,' a two-player contest "which has elements of cooperation and competition in it." In each round, opposing players, separated by an opaque glass layer, pushed either a competitive (red) or a cooperative (green) button.

If both players pushed the green button, they won 15 cents each, explains Rotenberg. If both players pushed the red button, they won only 5 cents, he adds. And if one player pushed the red while the other pushed the green, the competitive player, who took 25 cents, was the only winner.

"Clearly, one person can succeed at the other's expense. But if everyone cooperates, then they all come out ahead."

To determine how trusting his subjects were, Rotenberg paired each student, in turn, with a "confederate disguised as a student." He also provided an intercom so players could state their intentions beforehand. When pressing the buttons, his subjects always went first.

Confederates were instructed to press any button, regardless of their stated intentions, during the first few rounds. For the rest of

the match, they copied what their opponents did, playing "tit-for-tat." Thus, each subject was pitted against someone who became increasingly predictable as the game unfolded.

It turned out the non-lonely subjects responded more positively to their partners, says Rotenberg. They were more likely than lonely subjects to cooperate, "to press the green button if they said they would."

By comparison, trusting behaviour was far less evident among the lonely subjects - perhaps because of very negative events in their past, he speculates. "In a future study, we'll pursue this by examining to what extent feeling of betrayal can lead to loneliness."

Rotenberg also intends to examine in detail the appropriateness of lonely people's conversational behaviour. "If I

sit down and tell you all my problems, we have a norm which prescribes that you should reciprocate. Society believes it's desirable to do so."

During a preliminary study, he found that lonely people approve of others who adhere strictly to this convention. This means they particularly disapprove of people who disclose too much when the initial level of intimacy is low. They feel that someone who follows up current events gossip with news about their love life is committing a serious gaffe.

The problem is, this attitude dooms relationships from the start, Rotenberg argues. "So long as no one escalates the level of intimacy in a disclosure, a relationship will always be stuck at an unsatisfying level."  
(Canadian Science News)

## Community Service Bulletins



If you are a non-profit organization, service club or charity or church group and would like us to publish your community service announcement of community interest, call us at 877-2201 during regular office hours. There is no charge for this service to Halton Hills community groups. The deadline for submissions is Friday at Noon for publication for the following Wednesday. Deadlines will not be extended. Although we will do our best to print all announcements, space is limited and there are no guarantees of insertion.

### Happenings

Credit Valley Artisans Spring Sale, May 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Cedarvale Cottage, Cedarvale Park.

Georgetown Lionsess Club "Kilometre of Coins" drive for Kidney Dialysis Vacation Camps. We will be holding a blitz May 11, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Georgetown Miracle Food Mart Plaza.

Halton Hills Ambulance Service is willing to provide your school, club, business or other group with short or long presentations on the nature and history of the Service. For information call Phil at 877-1615, leave a message.

Summer School of the Performing Arts at Nelson High School, Oakville, July 1-19. Deadline for registration May 15. For information contact 333-3499.

St. John's United Church presents a comedy evening with the Second City Touring Company, Tues., May 14 at the John Elliott Theatre. Tickets \$15, available by calling 877-5545, 877-2531 or 877-2827.

The Kennedy Connection presents Recycled Toy Sale, Fri., May 3, 2 p.m.-4:30 p.m. at the rear doors (gym) of George Kennedy School.

Acton Parent Child Resource Centre present a Mother's Day Bazaar, May 4, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Acton Citizen's Band Hall, 85 Wallace St. 25 tables featuring local artist and craft people.

55 Alive/Mature Driving and innovative classroom re-training program for mature drivers to improve driving skills. Starting in May and June. Available through Acton Social Services and Information Centre. Call Sue, 853-3310.

The Kennedy Connection presents a Recycled Toy Sale, Friday, May 3, 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the gym at the rear of George Kennedy School.

St. John's United Church, 11 Guelph St. is holding a yard sale, silent auction and car wash on Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Proceeds to local community outreach programs.

Esqueing Historical Society presents Ballinafad Remember - Eleanor and Will Melean will recall the history of Ballinafad, Wed., May 8, 7:30 p.m. at the Ballinafad Town Hall. For more info call Karen Hunter at 838-2109.

Rotary Club of Georgetown Garage Sale, May 4th. Call 877-5285 for pickup of items that you want to donate for a worthy cause.

Georgetown District Memorial Hospital Auxiliary is holding a Country and Western Dance at Holy Cross Auditorium, Sat., May 4, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. \$10 per person includes lunch. Call Bev, 877-9790 or VI at 877-4593.

Milton and District Horticultural Society holds its popular plant auction Monday, May 13 in Pint Street Union Hall (behind the Milton Public Library). Sale starts at 6:30 p.m.

### Meetings

Attention lawn bowlers - Annual Spring Meeting, May 13th at 7:15 p.m. in club house. Please try to attend.

Georgetown Figure Skating Club annual general meeting at Joseph Gibbons School, 7:30 p.m., Friday, May 3.

Credit Valley Artisans general meeting at Cedarvale Cottage, Wednesday, May 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Crime prevention seminars for all Halton Hills businesses at 11 Div. community room, 217 Guelph St. Thursday May 23 and Wed., May 29 at 7:30 p.m. Contact PC Laurel Barnett or Sgt. Dave Gurilliams at 878-5511, ext. 405 to reserve a seat(s).

Holy Cross PTA annual general meeting, May 15, 8 p.m. at Holy Cross School gym. Speaker Shirley Tontini, educator at the Oakville Parent Child Center. For info or tickets call 873-0123 or 877-8251.

Adoption Disclosure Information Forum, Thurs., May 9, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Burnhamthorpe Public Library, Dixie Rd. and Burnhamthorpe Rd., Mississauga. No charge. For info call the Children's Aid Society at (416) 456-1352.

Open Door Teen Drop-In Centre and The Young Parents Program general annual meeting, Sat., May 25 at 9:00 a.m. at St. George's Anglican Church. For more info call Ann at 873-2966 or Cindy at 873-2520.

Halton Hills United Way Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, May 15, 5:00 p.m. at Acton District High School, 21 Cedar Rd. Refreshments. Everyone welcome.

Acton Social Services and Information Centre annual general meeting and volunteer appreciation, Wed., May 8 at St. Alban's Church Hall, Willow St. N. Acton. Wine and cheese at 6:30, meeting at 7:30. All welcome.

Rotary Club of Georgetown meets Mondays at 6:45 p.m. at the Chateau Restaurant. For more info call Ian Walker at 877-9182.

Acton Lions Club meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 8 p.m. at Legion Branch 197, Acton. For information contact Dave Pyke at 853-3410.

Lionsess Club of Georgetown meet at the members homes of the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. For info contact Louise Giffin at 877-8888.

Meetings of the Region of Peel VBAC Support Group held the 1st Tuesday of each month and offer post-caesarean support and discuss birth options. Call 826-9467 or 873-2779.

P.I.N.S. - Parents in Need of Support meet at Trinity United Church, Mill St., Acton, 3rd Thursday of every month, 7:30 p.m. For more info call 853-1512.

Kiwanis Club of Georgetown meets Wednesdays at the Halton Golf and Country Club for a noon luncheon. For info contact John Schajlo, 877-5206.

Halton Hills Toastmasters meet Mondays, 7:30 p.m., Glen Williams Town Hall. For info call Don at 873-3954 or Paul at 853-3712.

Kinsmen Club of Georgetown meet every other Wednesday at the McGibbon Hotel at 7 p.m. For more info call Ron Lefebvre at 877-2370.

Lion's Club of Georgetown meets every Tuesday at the Lion's Hall, Mill St., behind the arena at 7 p.m. For info contact Bill Mason, 877-7901.

The Rotary Club of Acton meets Thursdays at 6 p.m. at the Wooden Hearth Restaurant. For more info call Brian Robertson at 853-1633.

Georgetown Branch 120 Royal Canadian Legion monthly meeting 8 p.m., 4th Thursday of each month at the Georgetown Legion Branch, 127 Mill St., Georgetown. For more info call 877-4413.

Optimist Club of Georgetown meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the club, Hwy. 7. For more info contact Sandy Booth at 877-4569.

Living With Cancer Group meets every second Thursday at the Canadian Cancer Society, Milton Branch, 751 Main St. E. at 7:30 p.m. For more info call 877-5228 or 878-1876.

La Leche League of Georgetown and Acton meet the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. to talk about breast feeding and parenting. Pregnant moms and nursing babies welcome. For more info call Sandra at 878-4732.

### Volunteers

Volunteer training session to celebrate Mental Health Week. Open to everyone. Mondays at 7:30 p.m., May 6, 13, 27, June 3, at 341 Kerr St., Oakville. Call 845-5044 for more info.

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Acton and Georgetown needs volunteers to sell carnations for 2 hrs. on Sat., May 11 in Acton and Georgetown. If interested call Jane at 853-1756 or Doris at 877-6588.

Georgetown Vintners are looking for amateur winemakers. For info call 877-5302.

Red Cross Georgetown and District requires volunteers to assist in Finance and Publicity, driving and First Aid instructions. For more info call Bernice, 877-5233.

Alcoholics Anonymous can help. Call 877-1211 for more information.

Canadian Mental Health Association, Halton Region Branch, needs volunteers for recreation programs on Tues., Wed. and Thurs. evenings in Burlington, Oakville and Acton. For more info call Laura McCallum at 845-5044.

The Salvation Army will pick up appliances in working order. For more information call 853-3321.

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