

The Meaning Behind Togetherness

Philosophy is often used as a shepherd for how to live a life. For some, it sets the path for a new reality, while for others, it affirms ideas that have already stirred within.

In “What is Togetherness and Why is it Good?” by James Lewis, a Lecturer in philosophy at Cardiff University, Lewis offered a wholesome addition to the latter in his [paper](#) published last January in the Philosophical Review. True to the title, his research explained that the benefits of togetherness lie in sharing the things we find meaningful. This may not come as a surprise, but Lewis thinks this is a part of life that cannot be overanalyzed.

This, he said, harkening back to the words of Socrates, is because “the unexamined life is not worth living.”

Togetherness was a concept that seemed self-evident before the COVID-19 pandemic. But in order to work, connect and coexist, a new understanding emerged. Now, six years later and without the same health risks posed, some of the at-a-distance practices of togetherness remain. For instance, [Gallup](#) reports that one-third of American employees in 2025 still prefer to work fully remote. That dominates the 10% that prefer to be on-site.

Despite the desired distance between workers, the popularity of ‘being remote’ does not contradict how Lewis sees togetherness. He notes, “It’s not to do with your proximity to other people. It’s to do with the way you’re relating to the world.”

He does not see this concept so literally. At the core, he believes that to be together is a matter of sharing meaning and experience — not a space. Solitary experiences can be shared too. For instance, think of a walk through nature that is so profound or a dream that is so absurd that it demands calling a friend to tell the story. For Lewis, an experience like this that comes to mind is listening to music. Bonding over a song does not necessitate that it’s heard side-by-side.

If it’s easier than ever to be physically isolated but still feel together with others, then why is loneliness still such a problem? Loneliness, much like togetherness, is not always a literal matter.

Evidence from the pandemic affirms this, too. [Research](#) from 2024 indicated that 43% of Americans felt just as lonely that year as they did before COVID. Isolation requirements had been lifted for a year by then. If concepts like togetherness were as intuitive as one may think, then it would stand to reason that loneliness rates would have shifted more.

“Loneliness always makes sense insofar as we have meaningful experiences that go unshared,” said Lewis. “And if you’re experiencing the world without feeling its meaningfulness, then you’re going to be lonely.”

A 2024 report from the [Harvard School of Education](#) titled “Loneliness in America: Just the Tip of the Iceberg?” found that 21% of adults in the U.S. feel lonely. The report went on to state that loneliness is a concoction of other emotional variables like anxiety, depression, and, most in line with Lewis’ understanding, “a lack of meaning and purpose,” as written in the paper.

The Cardiff University lecturer observed that modern society can often be held responsible for those types of feelings. Loneliness is also a consequence of dead and unenlivened experiences.

So, to feel lonely is not simply to be alone. Togetherness is not simply to be in the company of another. Still, at first glance, Lewis’s findings on the topics in “What is Togetherness and Why is it Good?” may seem like shining a light on what is already bright, and in a way Lewis agrees: “when I’m reflecting in this piece on whether loneliness is bad and why, there’s not that much to say about it in terms of particular principles, it’s like it’s bad.”

To Lewis’ point, maybe we need more than just knowing loneliness is bad to stay away from it. In examining togetherness, we can see that being together is not just a social good, but a fundamental part of life’s meaning. When we examine why we need to share meaning, we can lead more appreciative and intentional lives.

Examining togetherness is not in spite of its naturalness, but because of it.