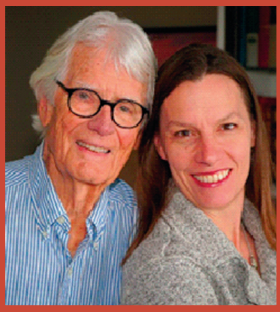




HEALTH CORNER



What We Got Wrong About Independence

By Diana Gifford

What's happened, that we feed our children a single definition of success? Grow up and leave home, climb the ladder, buy a house, and live an "independent" life. At the same time, aging parents assert they must never become a burden on their grown children. These aspirations for self-reliance are ingrained in our concept of good living.

But I wonder if we have it wrong.

Personal conviction, self-directed decisions, accomplishing goals on one's own – these are all powerful elements of autonomy that come with the reward of feeling accomplished and satisfied. But interdependence – begin together and relying on others – is what keeps people healthy. We are a social species, and in social groups is how human beings are best suited to live.

In our modern ways of organizing ourselves in society, we have forgotten that multigenerational households were the norm for most of human history. It's been a relatively recent development that we have measured success by dispersing the family into multiple homes, each behind its own closed door.

The social experiment is not going well. Loneliness has become a public-health epidemic, increasing the risk of premature death at rates comparable to smoking and obesity! Meanwhile, the housing data tell a striking story. While the buzz is loud about lack of housing, in fact, our communities are full of empty bedrooms. Literally millions of them, most in the homes of older adults living alone. At the same time, young people are struggling to find an affordable apartment, weighed down by debt, and postponing milestones like starting families because rent consumes too much of their income. We have a structural surplus of space and a structural deficit in seeing solutions.

What if the answer is not more construction, but more connection?

Small but powerful examples are showing the benefits. Home-share programs match seniors with university students. Cohousing developments arrange single older adults in private suites around shared kitchens and gardens. Some young people, groups of friends, are going in together on the purchase of a jointly-owned first home. In these settings, researchers find better mental health, greater life satisfaction, and fewer emergency-room visits by older residents. Togetherness is good medicine.

As for the fear of being a burden, it deserves reconsideration. Studies show that adult children who help care for a parent often feel more purpose and emotional closeness, not resentment. Older adults living with family tend to stay healthier and independent longer. Ironically, the determination to avoid burdening anyone can lead to the very outcome people are trying to avoid.

And more good news, as there are environmental benefits. Multigenerational households use far less energy per person. Three generations under one roof leave a much smaller environmental footprint than three separate homes. Living together is climate friendly. But the biggest factor is economic. A large body of research has shown that one of the most significant determinants of health is economic status. Yes, studies on the health impacts of living alone, of single parent versus traditional family structures, or of communal living, offer insights. But the research is clear that these factors are less important to health than the mighty dollar. So, if living together will improve financial wellbeing, then it's an excellent investment in health.

Multigenerational living isn't right for every family. But for many, it could be exactly the right antidote – to financial stress, and to today's fractured social landscape. We would do well to create more well-designed cohabitation, with vetted roommates, seniors paired with students, and shared community spaces. As a result, we could expect stronger family ties, improved housing utilization, reduced loneliness, and better health.

This column offers opinions on health and wellness, not personal medical advice. Visit www.docgiff.com to learn more. For comments, diana@docgiff.com. Follow on Instagram @diana_gifford_jones

Fa-La-La-Hacked: 5 ways hackers target you on holiday trips

Many travelers don't realize that their hotel rooms can be hotspots for digital threats - making seemingly relaxing getaways a risky moment for their personal data and devices.

"Cybersecurity doesn't go on holiday just because you do. Even in your hotel room, hackers can exploit weak spots in public infrastructure and devices to access your information. That's why travelers need to take digital security seriously - especially when relying on unfamiliar networks abroad," says Matas Cenys, Senior product owner at Saily.

Here are five ways your devices can be hacked on vacation - and how to stay safe with smart precautions and secure mobile connectivity.

1. Hotel Wi-Fi: Protect your connection
Public Wi-Fi is convenient, but it's also one of the easiest gateways for hackers. In hotels, cybercriminals can exploit network vulnerabilities by either infecting the hotel's legitimate Wi-Fi or setting up fake hotspots - "evil twins" - that look like official hotel networks but are designed to steal your data.

What to do: Always confirm the correct network name with hotel staff. Even better, avoid public Wi-Fi entirely by using mobile data via an eSIM service, which provides secure, and affordable internet access.

2. USB charging ports: Stick to the socket
USB ports in hotel rooms may be convenient, especially for international travelers, but they're not always safe. Modified ports can enable "juice jacking" - a method where malware is transferred to your phone via the USB cable, allowing hackers to steal passwords, credit card numbers, or even your location.

What to do: Use your own charger and plug it directly into a power socket. For extra protection, consider traveling with a USB data blocker or a portable power bank.

3. Smart TVs: Don't let your screen spy on you
Smart TVs in hotel rooms often come equipped with cameras, microphones, and access to streaming services - and they're sometimes poorly secured. Hackers can exploit these devices to eavesdrop, watch, or capture login credentials.
What to do: Avoid logging into apps using personal accounts. Unplug the TV when not in use, and cover the camera if possible.

4. Automatic connections: Disable and defend
Most smartphones are set to connect automatically to known Wi-Fi networks, but this can backfire when you're surrounded by insecure or malicious networks. Devices can reconnect without you noticing - even when you're not in the room.
What to do: Turn off auto-connect for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. Enable security apps like firewalls or VPNs, and make sure they're set to launch automatically if you do connect to public networks.

5. Phishing scams: Don't let your guard down
Advanced cybercriminal groups like DarkHotel have been known to target high-profile travelers at luxury hotels with phishing campaigns and malware-laced networks. Their phishing emails are convincing, highly personalized, and designed to slip past even careful eyes.
What to do: Be vigilant. Avoid clicking suspicious links or downloading unknown attachments - even while on vacation. Keeping your software and apps updated can also reduce vulnerabilities.

Whether you're traveling for work or relaxation, make sure your devices are protected - so your memories are the only thing you bring home from your trip. Saily is an affordable and secure travel eSIM app that helps people to manage mobile and internet connections from anywhere in the world. Saily offers 24/7 instant customer support, flexible plans, and coverage in 200+ destinations.

Ben Fudge

Portrait Photographer

289-675-5299

bcfudge.com

BRANCH 43

471 Simcoe Street South Oshawa

Join Us

FOR

EUCHRE

MONDAY AT 1:P.M. WEDNESDAY AT 7:P.M.

Contact: Club Room Bar

905 723-9211

ALL SKILL LEVELS ARE INVITED 10 GAMES

CALL FOR A FREE ESTIMATE

905-251-2233

Email: qmr-masonry@gmail.com

QMR

Quality Masonry Restoration

Specializing in high quality masonry.

Fully insured, free estimates.

12+ years experience. - Brick and Blockwork

- Stonework - Window Sill Replacement

- Parging, Concrete Repairs - Chimney, Repointing and more...