

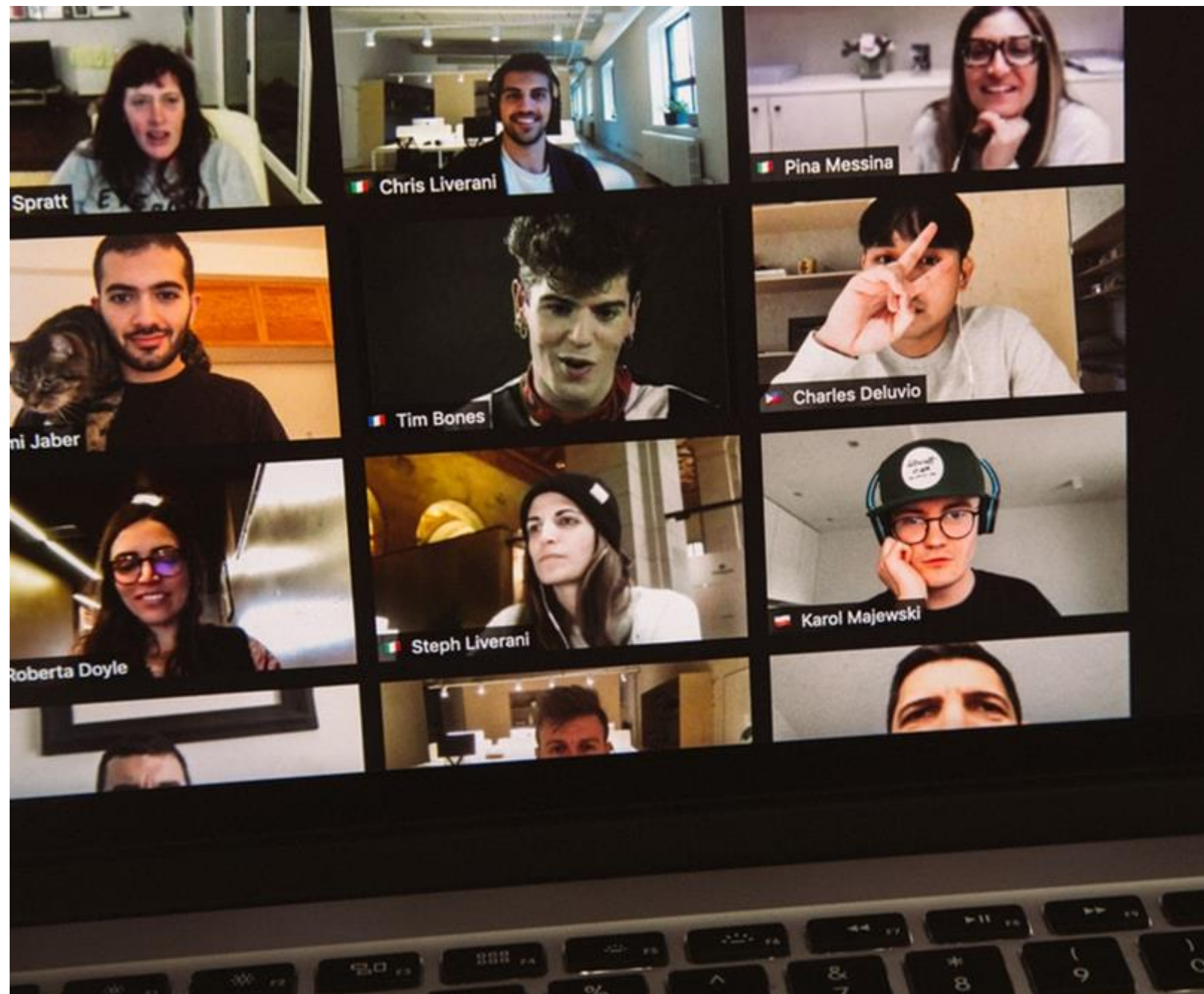
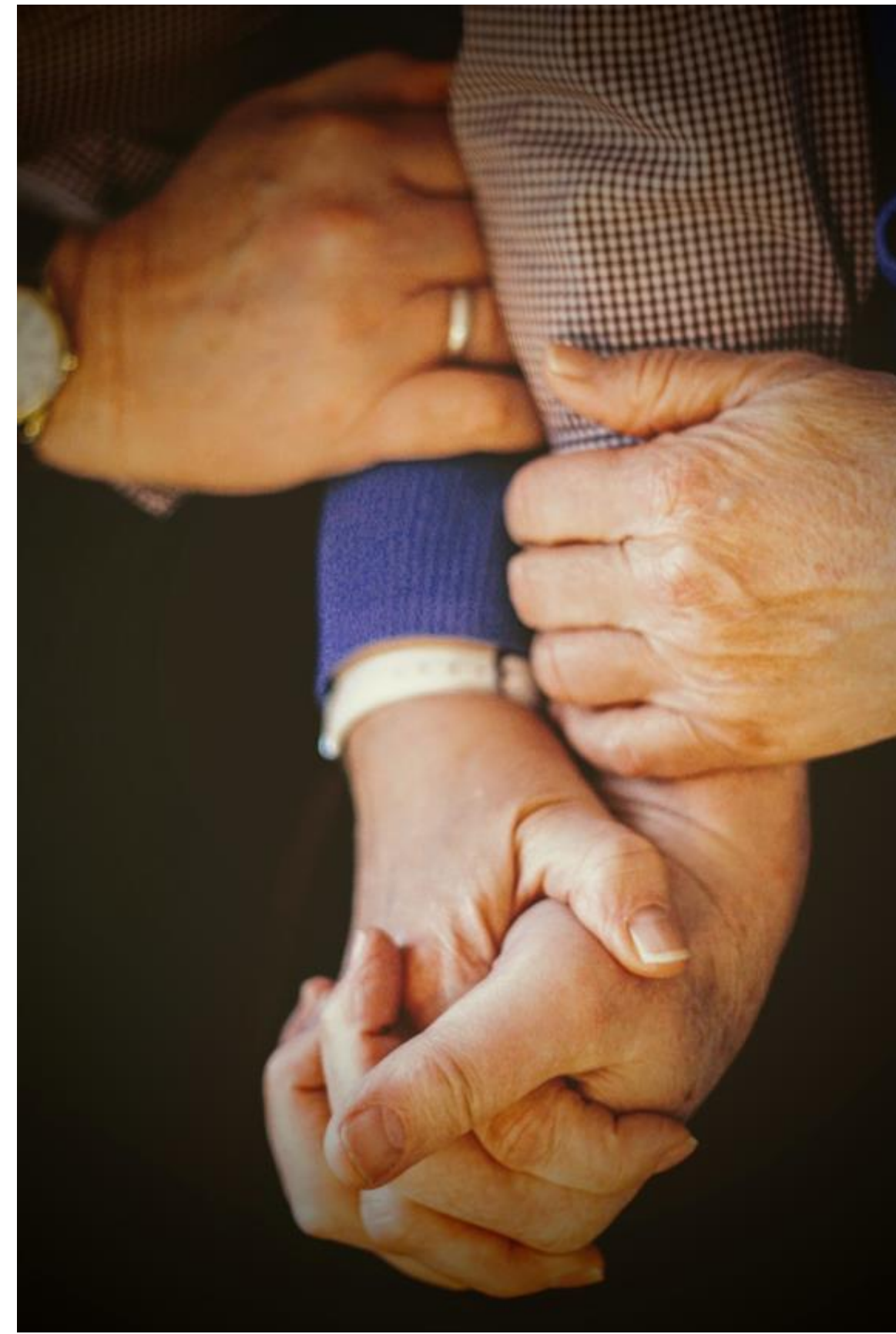


# **Building Your Personal Village for Your Solo Aging Plan**

**Positive Aging Community**  
April 7, 2023



# We are hardwired to connect





# Connections Matter

## Good connections

- ❖ Improve survival, success, and happiness
- ❖ Ease pain, release oxytocin, reduce anxiety



## Bad connections

- ❖ Interfere with sleep, increase BP and stress hormones
- ❖ Predict depression, chronic illness, and shorter lifespan



## Loneliness

- ❖ Worse than smoking, obesity, or alcoholism





# Connections Influence

## Social contagions spread in networks

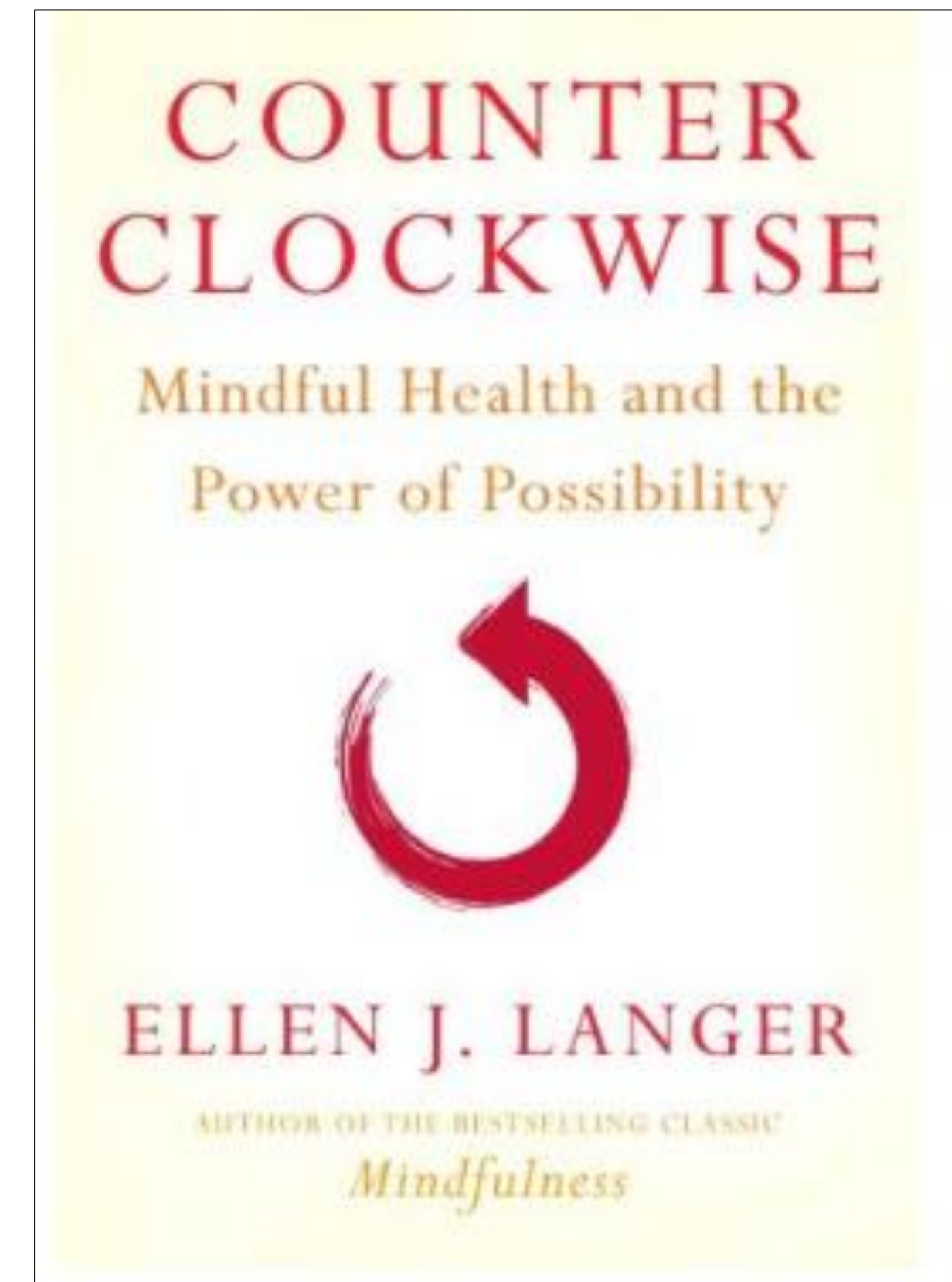
- ❖ Obesity, Smoking, Binge Drinking
- ❖ Depression, Suicide, Violence
- ❖ Educational attainment, Career advancement, Income

## Ageist connections harm

- ❖ Priming accelerates age-related decline

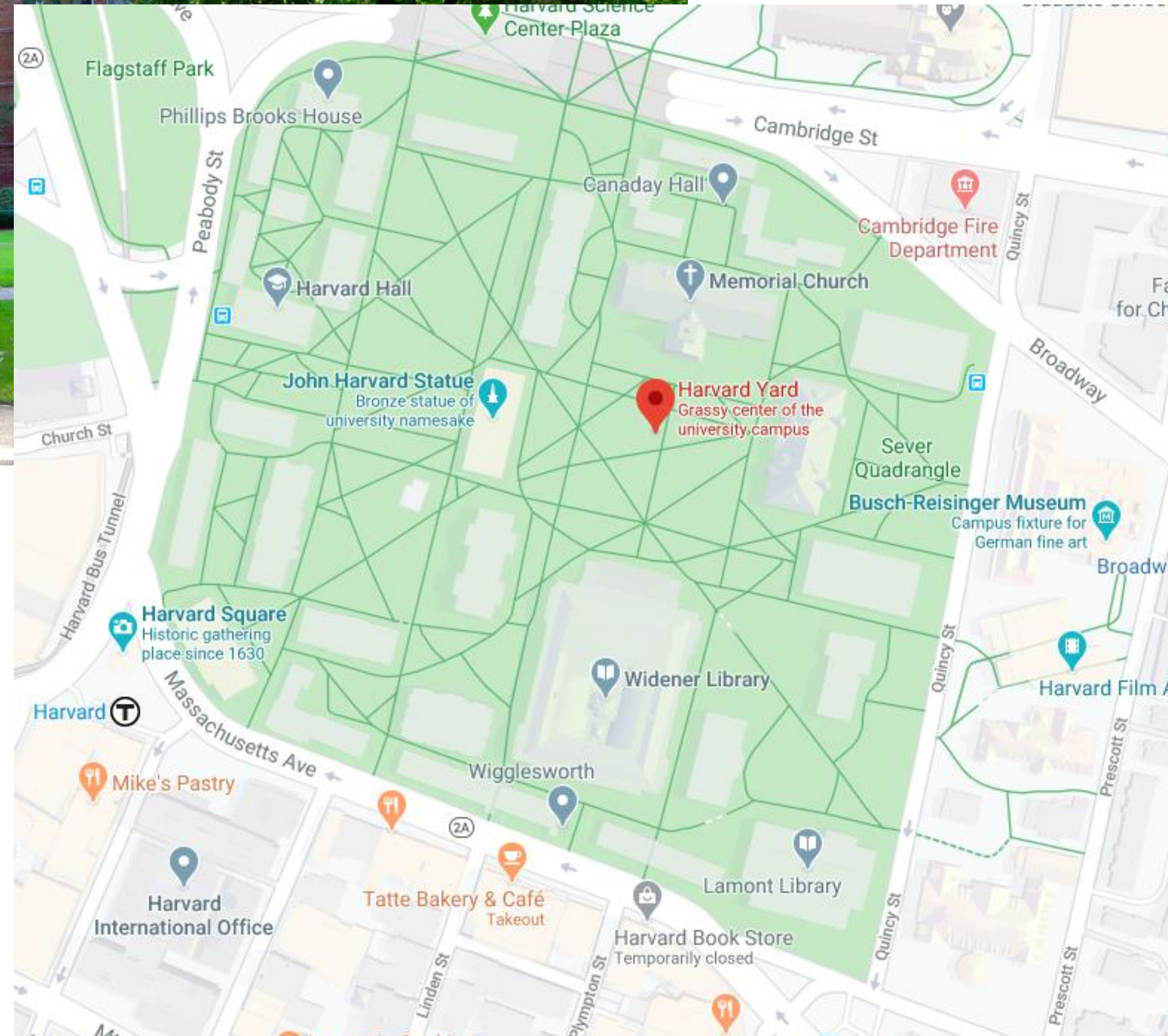
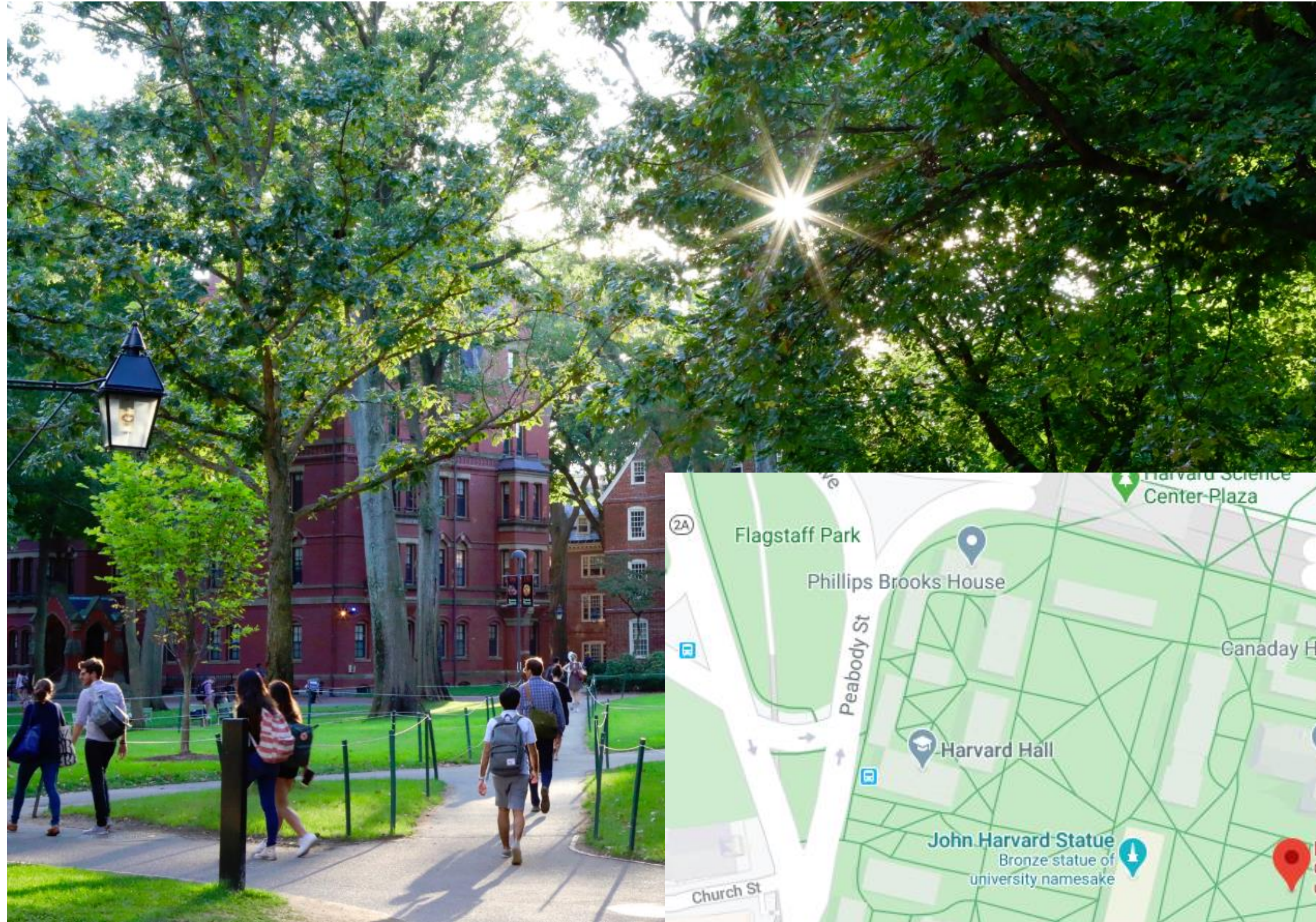
## Connections “cluster” as networks

**Networks are always mismanaged and are never optimized**





# Why? We have selective attention



*Three minutes...draw Harvard Yard...*

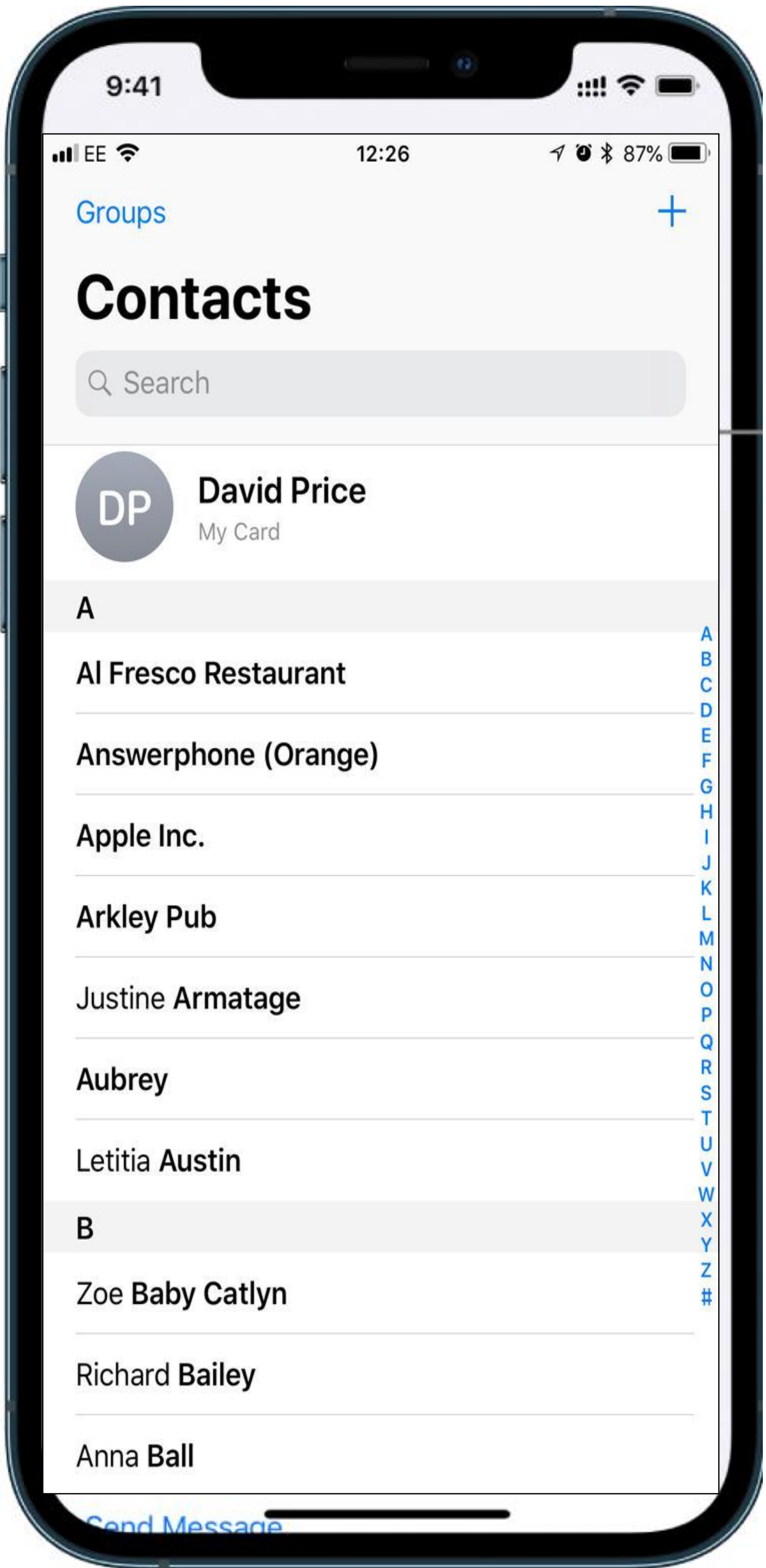
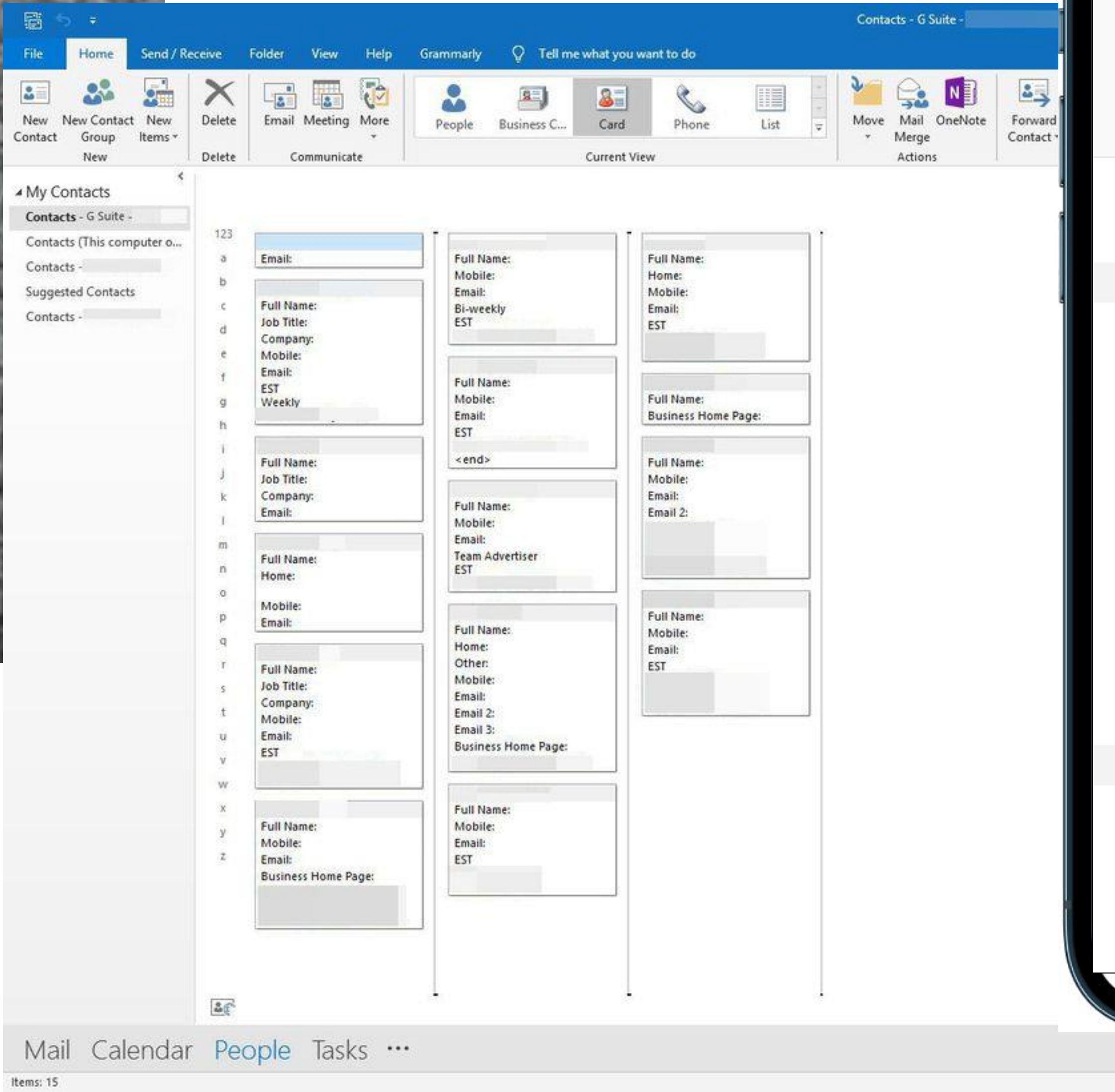
- ❖ No student drew it accurately
- ❖ The library was small or left it out
- ❖ Places they socialized were larger

*So, too, it is with us...*

We focus on our connections selectively

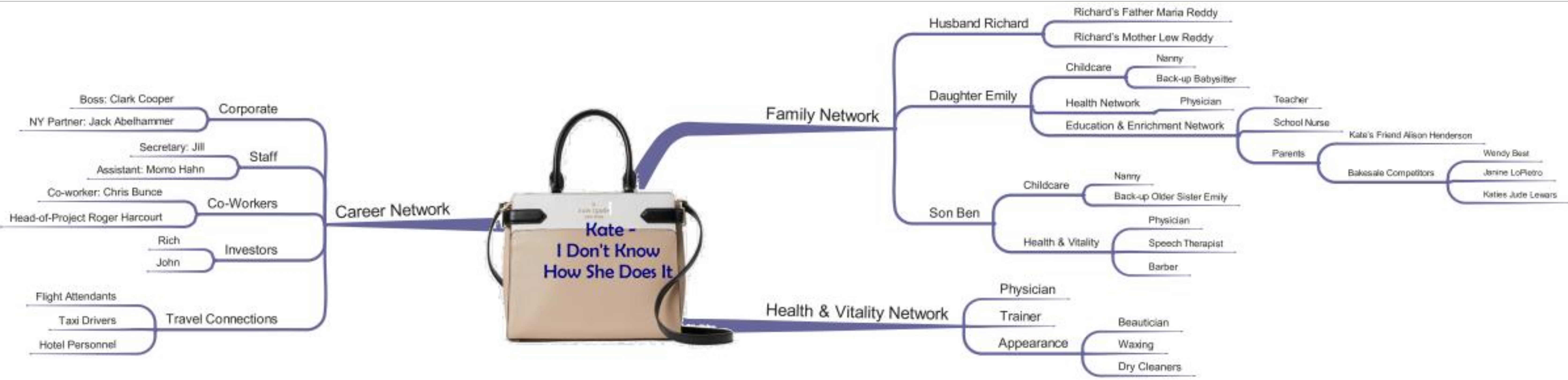


# Why? We have flawed tools





# Why? We have inaccurate media models



**Sarah Jessica Parker as “Kate” = 35 connections**

**In “real” life = 350 connections**



# Why? We have brains suited for the past

**You live here**



**Your cortex lives here**





# Upgrading your COS (cortex operating system)



## *Intuitive Organizing Framework*

Event Networks  
Life Networks

## *Solo Aging Planning*

Tip and Tricks  
Cautions  
Cases



# Organizing Framework: Event Networks are episodic



## *Life Events*

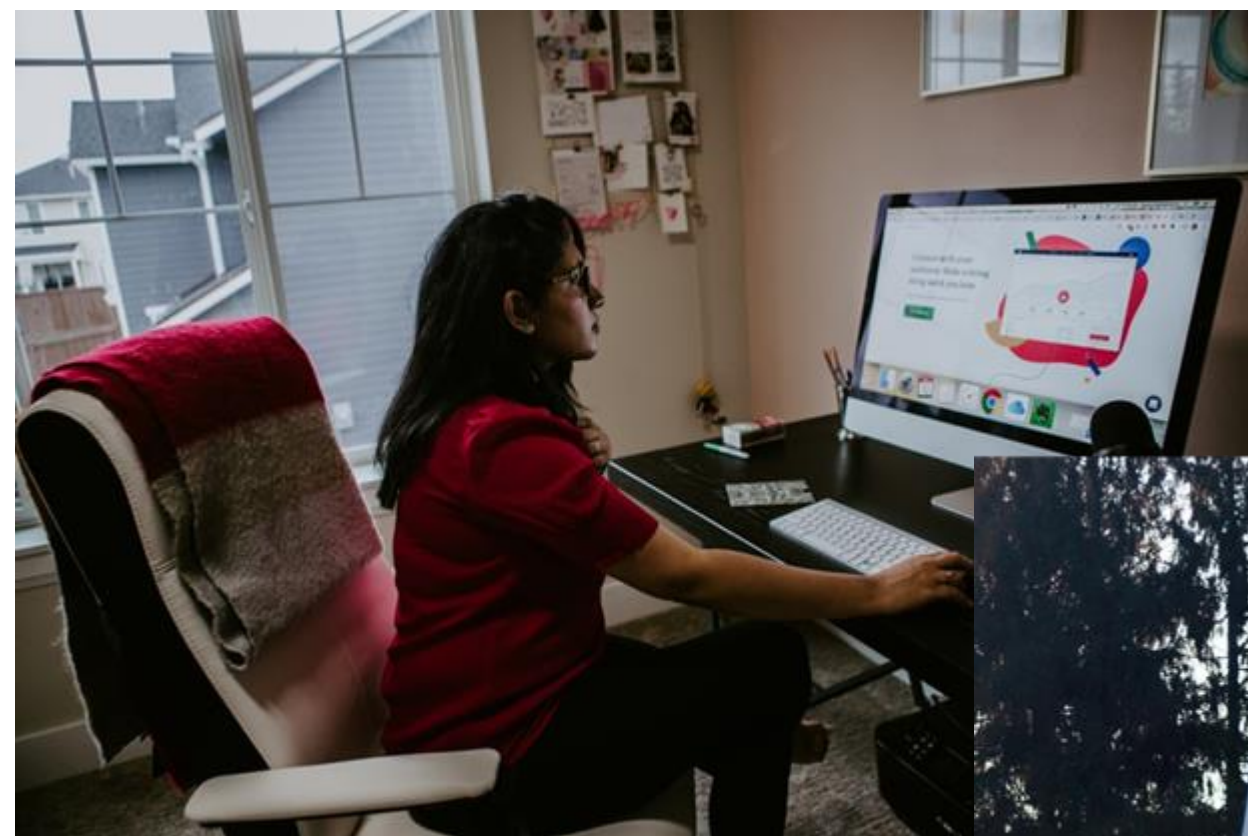
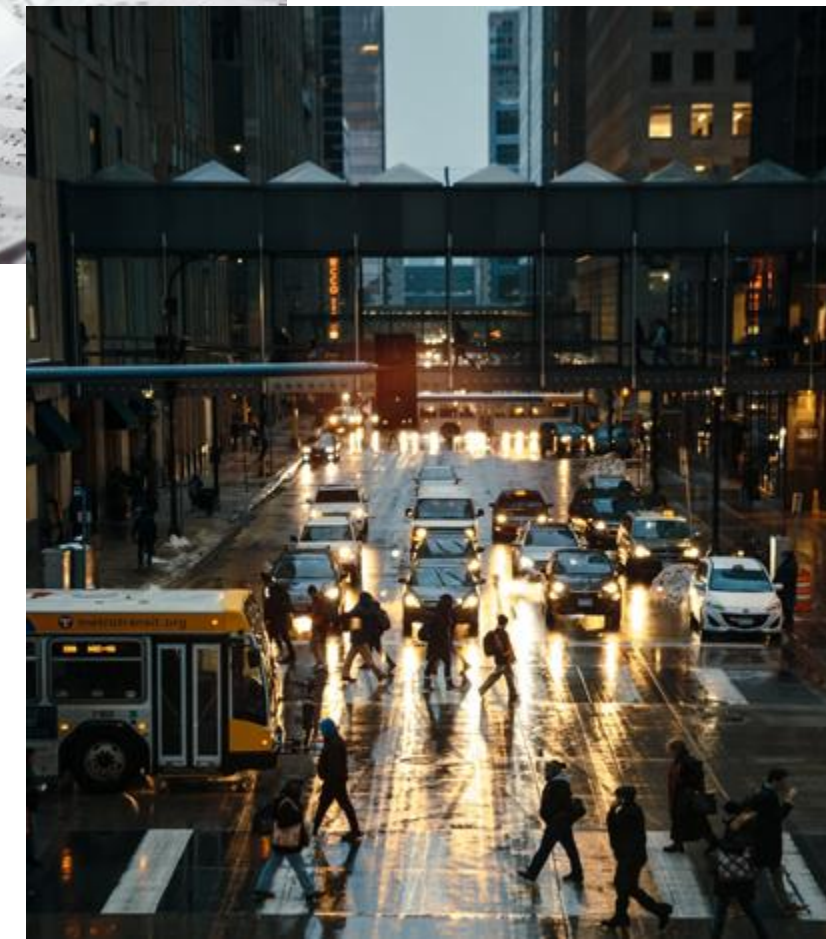
Wedding  
Homebuying  
Military deployment  
Job change  
Relocation  
Retirement  
Storm repair  
Estate Planning  
Death

## *Health Events*

Childbirth  
Surgery  
Disease diagnosis  
Accident  
Injury  
Hip replacement  
Colonoscopy  
Rehabilitation  
Hip Replacement



# Organizing Framework: *Life Networks are enduring*



## ***Birthright Networks***

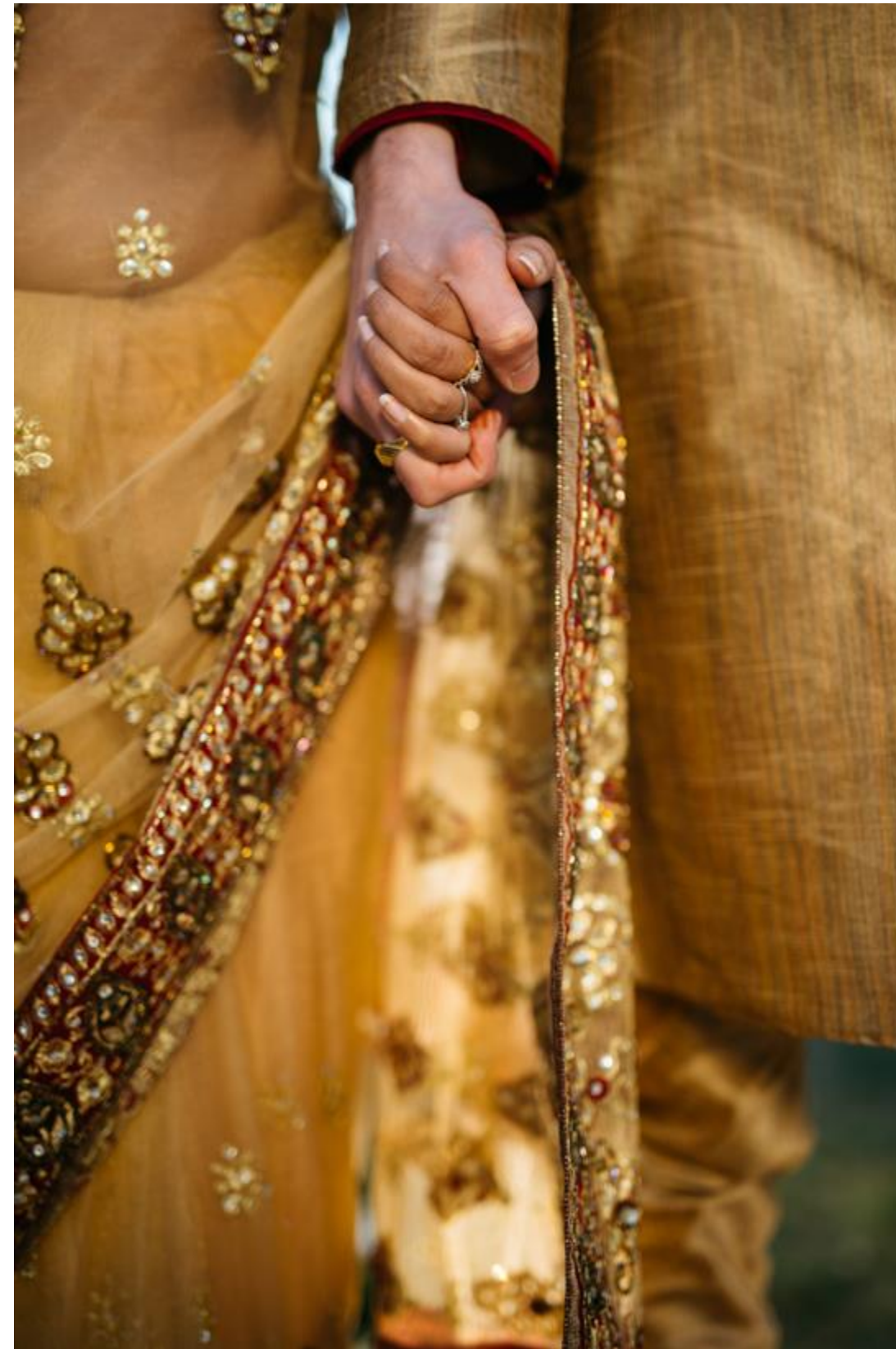
Family  
Health and Vitality  
Education and Enrichment  
Spiritual  
Social and Community

## ***Coming-of-Age Networks***

Career  
Home and Personal Affairs  
Ghosts



# Family Network



*This network includes...*

Family-of-origin

Family today

Former family

“Just like” family



# Health and Vitality Network



*This network includes...*

Primary medical/dental/vision care

Mental Health care

Specialist care

Hospital/Skilled Nursing/Rehab care

Fitness

Appearance



# Education and Enrichment Network



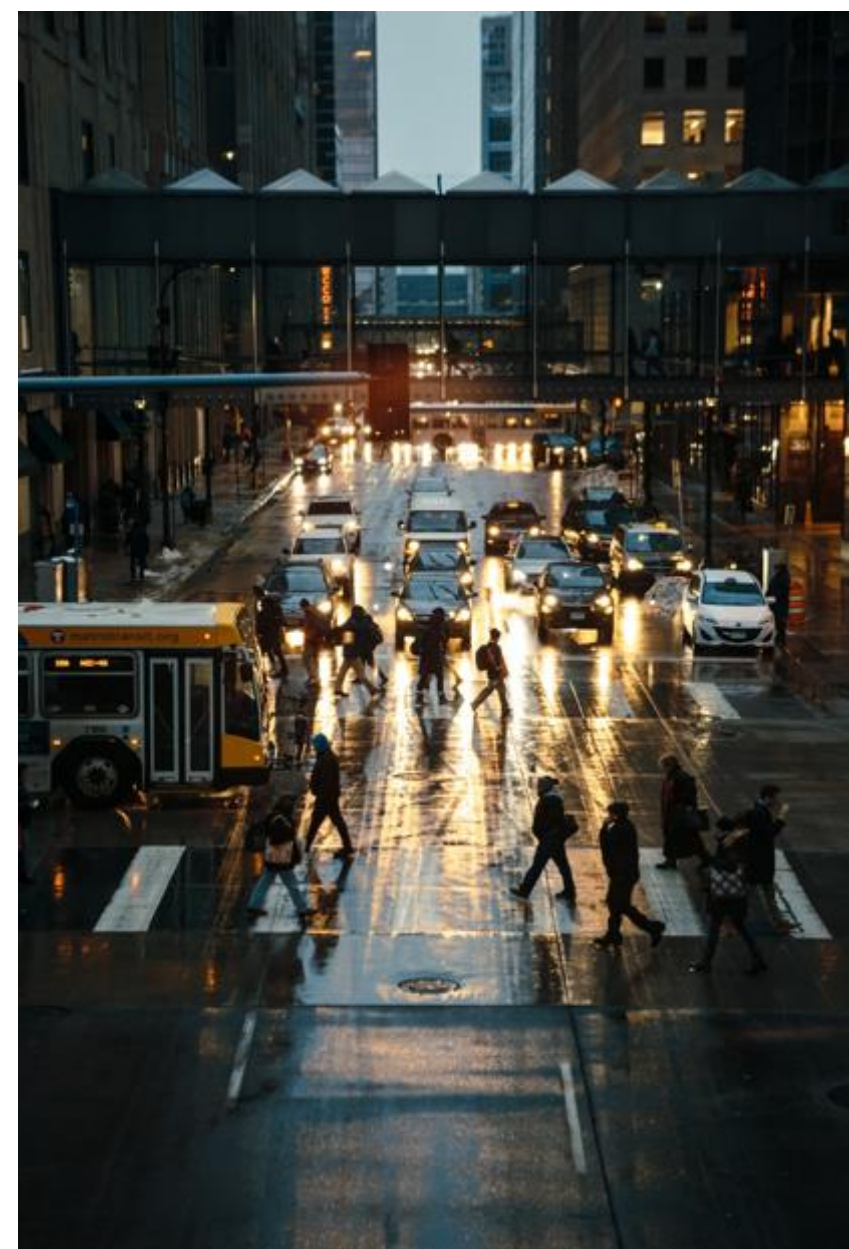
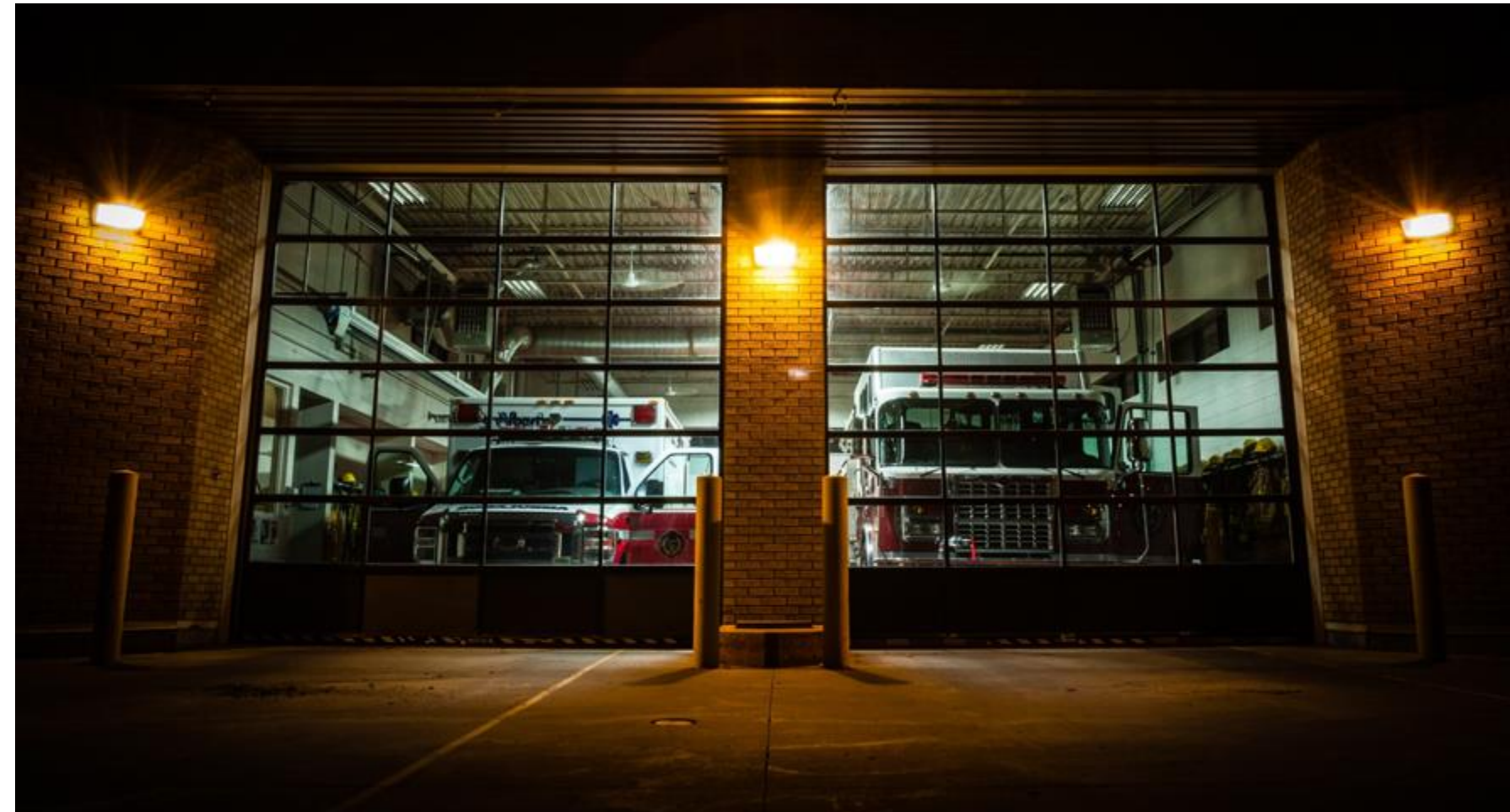
*This network includes...*

Schools

The Arts, Clubs, Affinity Groups, Hobby Groups, Fun Courses



# Social and Community Network



*This network includes...*

Friends, family friends, and neighbors

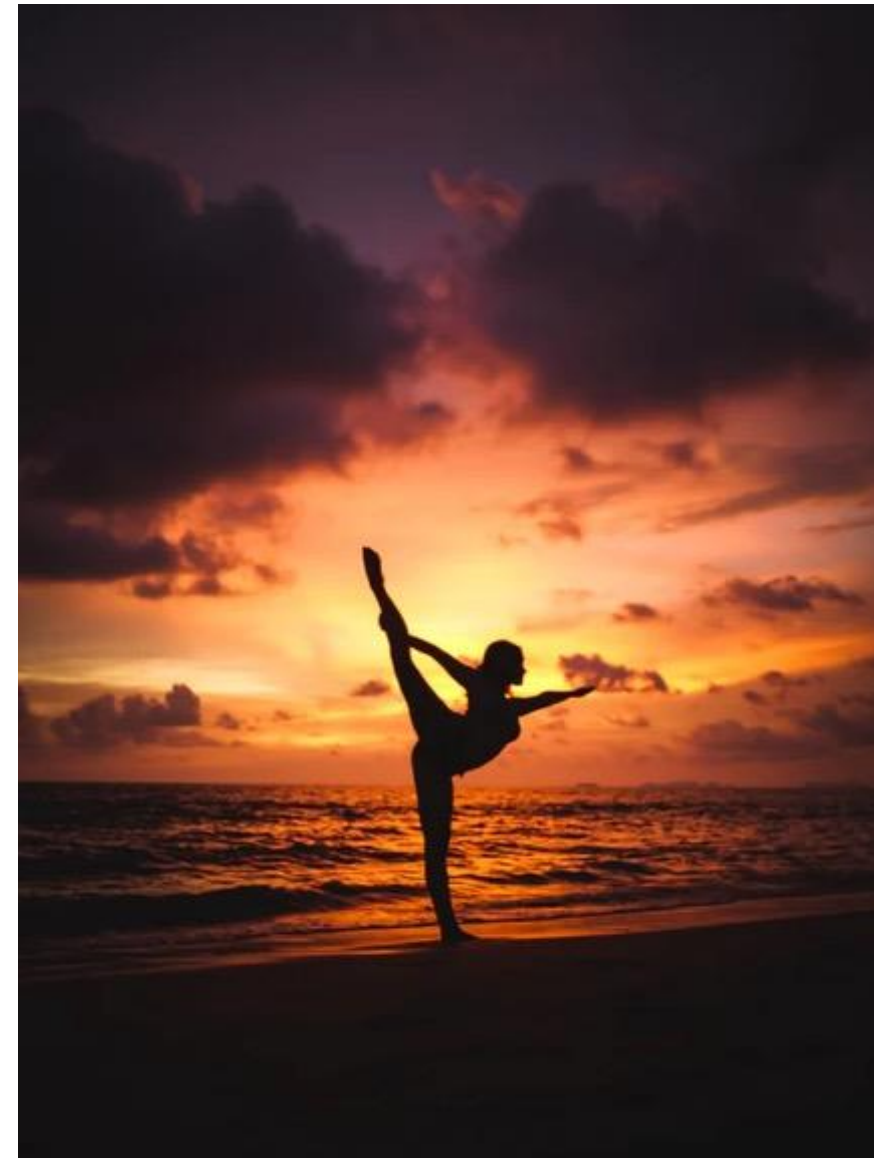
Community groups

Online groups

Governments



# Spiritual Network



*This network includes...*

Religious Congregation Clergy/Members

Spiritual activities outside formal  
congregational settings



# Career Network



***This network includes...***

Colleagues

Customers

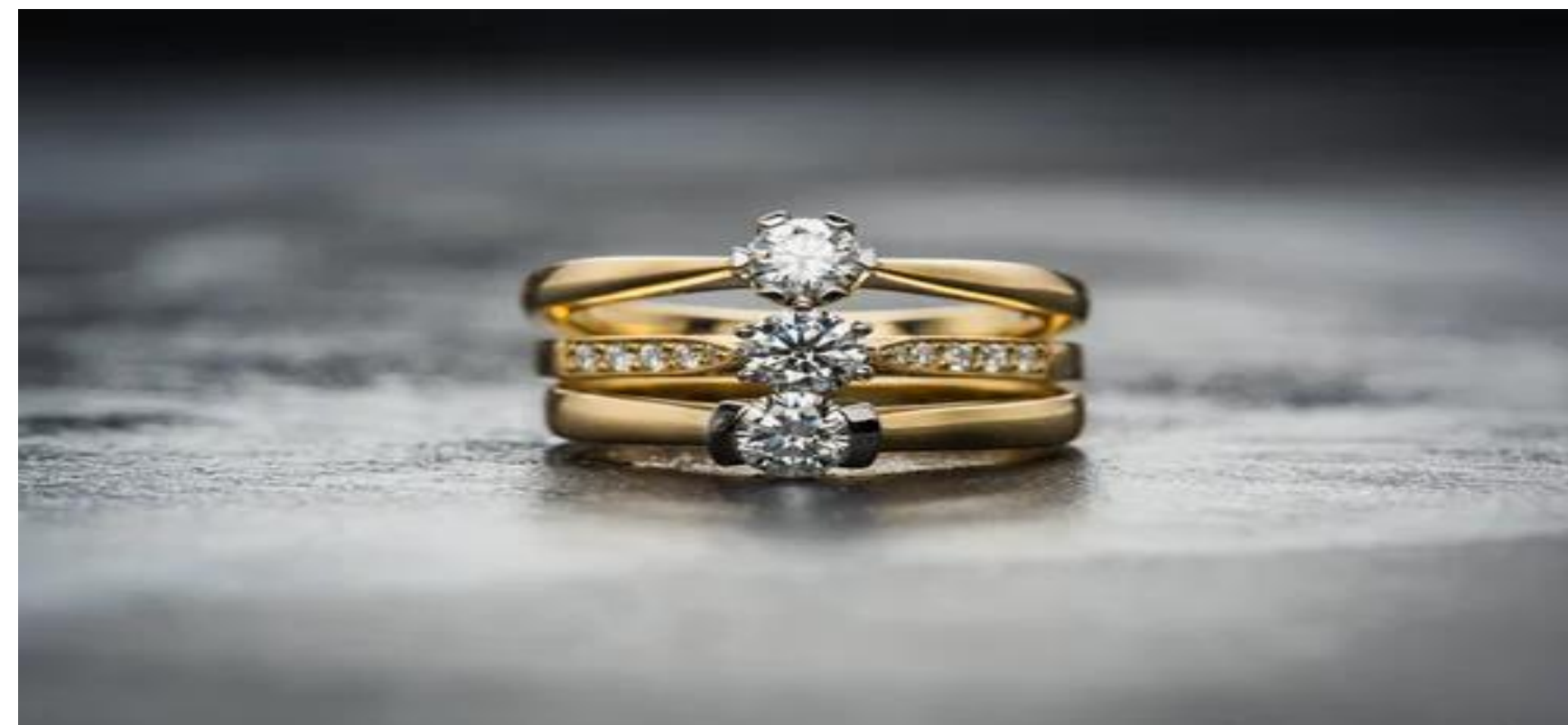
Regulators

Career network groups

Career advancement trainers



# Home and Personal Affairs Network



*This network includes....*

Real estate

Car dealer

Jeweler

Banker

Financial/Tax advisers

Attorneys/Estate Planners



# Ghost Networks



*This network includes...*

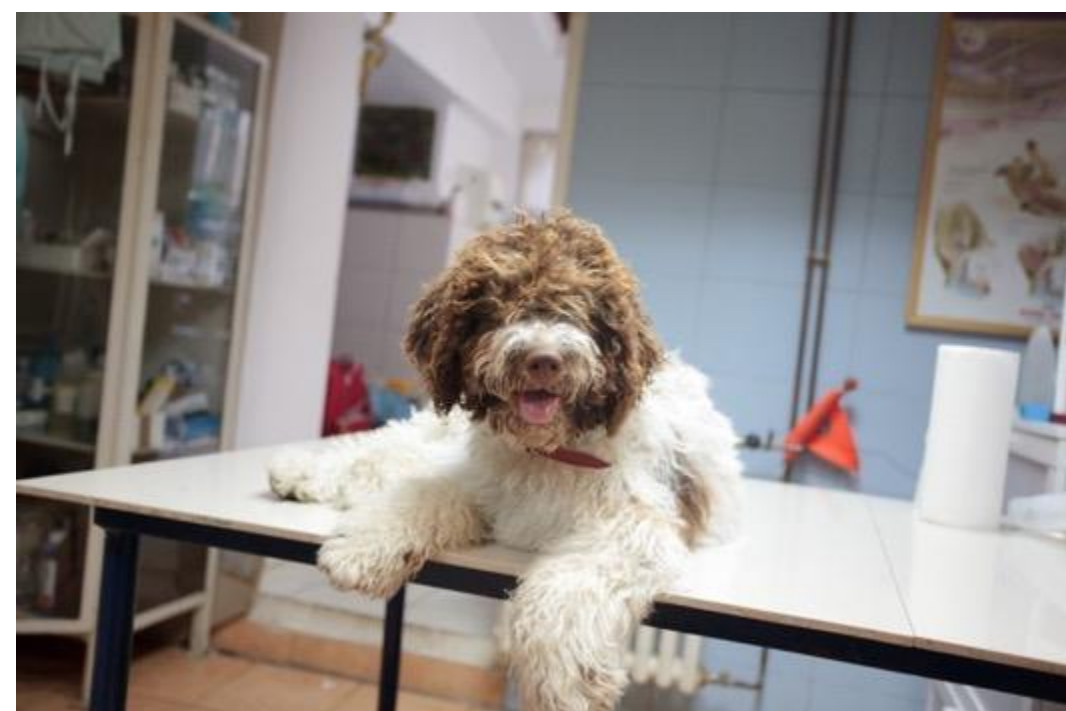
Friendly Ghosts

Hungry Ghosts

Role Models



# Pet Networks



***This network includes...***

Sitters

Walkers

Vets

Kennels

Trainers



# Planning for Solo Aging

# Become *AWARE* of your connections

- ❖ Who is PRIMARY? (the most important)
- ❖ Who is SUPPORT? (the helpers)
- ❖ Who is TRANSACTIONAL? (everyone else)

## CLARIFY what you want and need

- ❖ Is an important person missing?
- ❖ Do you have enough redundancy?
- ❖ What if your needs change?

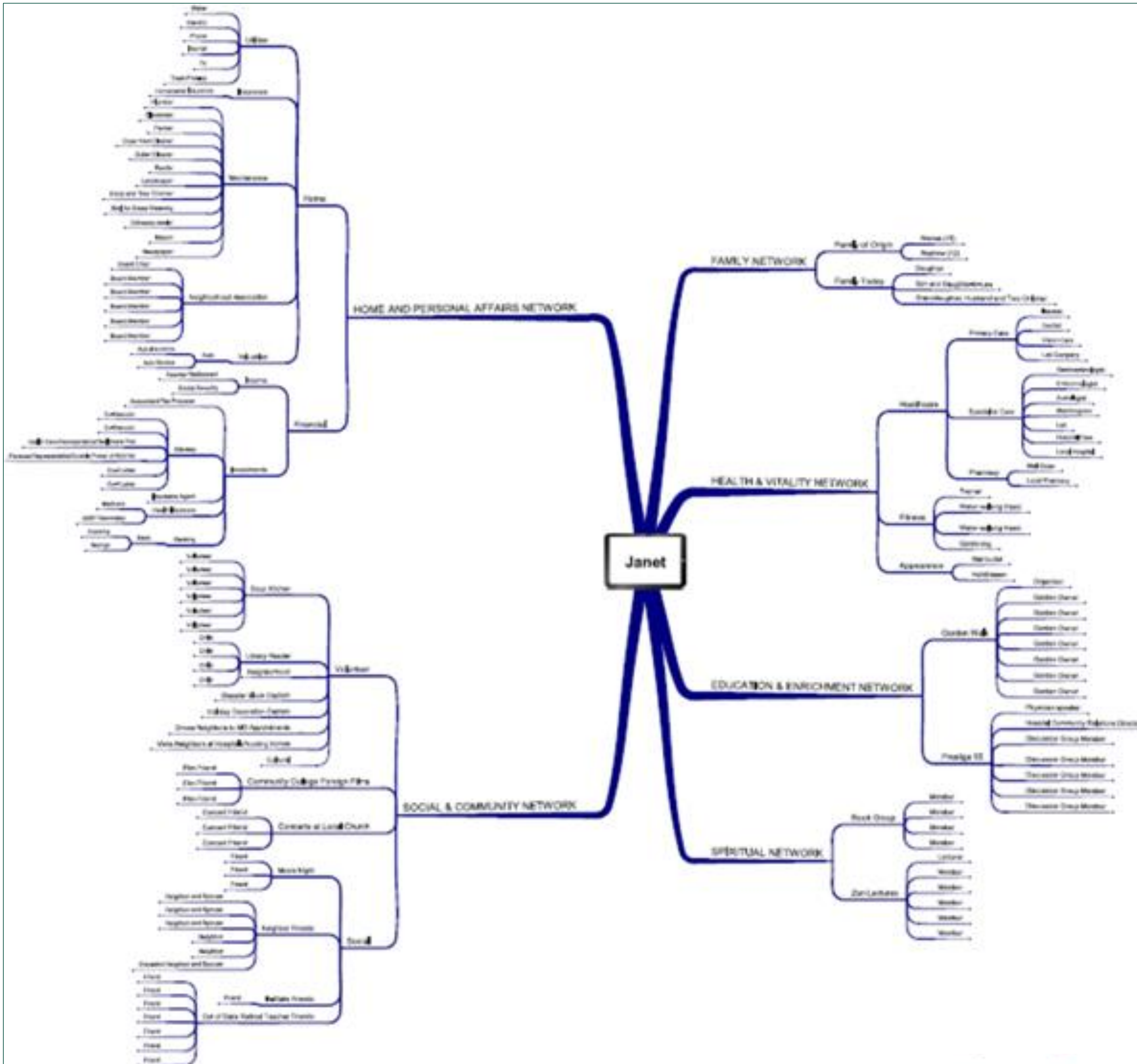
## Use insights to TAKE ACTION STEPS

- ❖ Quantity of connections
- ❖ Quality of connections





# Tips, tricks, cautions

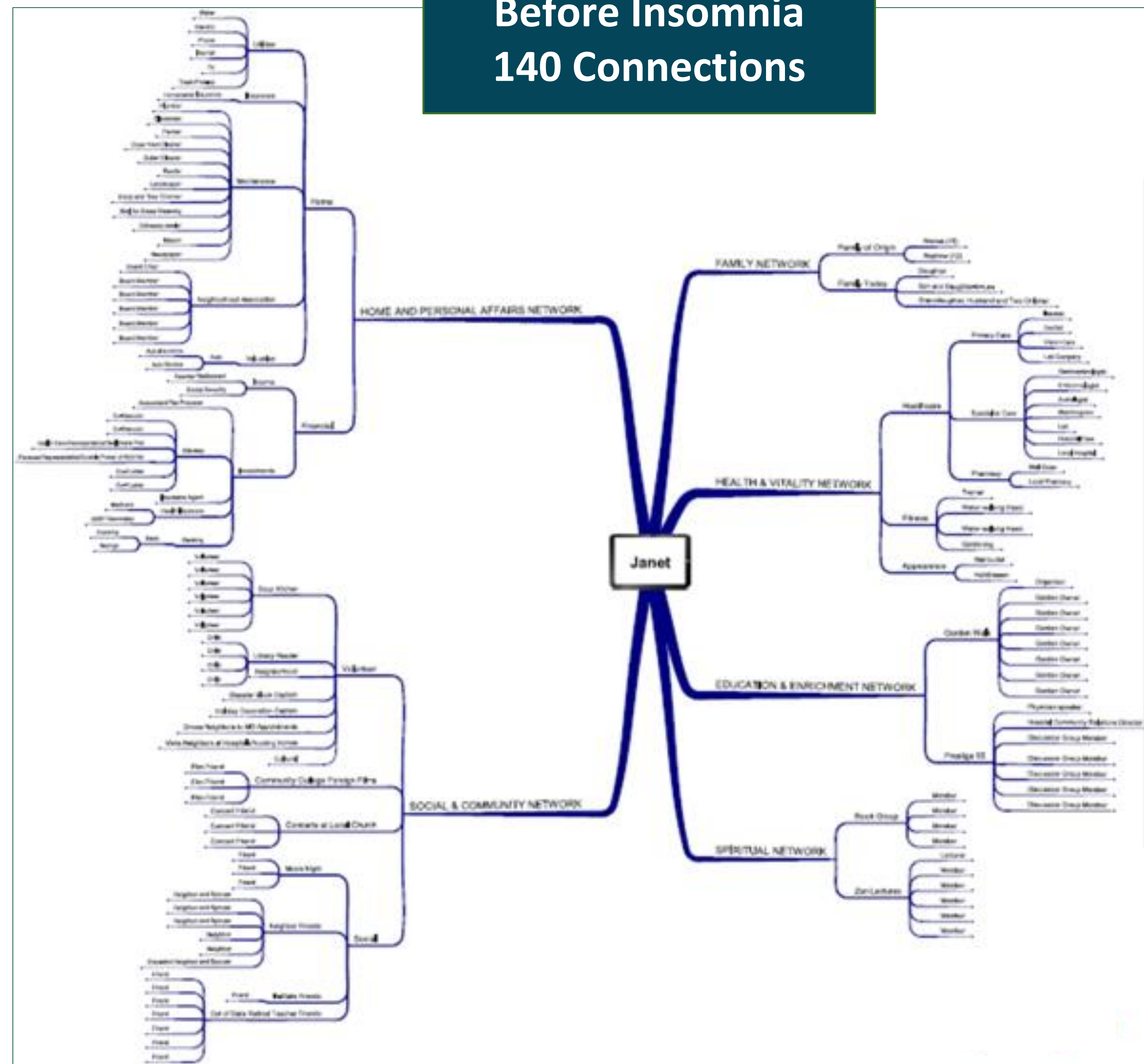


- ❖ Share information/location with a trusted person
- ❖ Select easy targets
- ❖ Address important targets
- ❖ Stay connected to information sources
- ❖ Seek competent guidance, but recognize their limits
  - ❖ Legal
  - ❖ Financial
  - ❖ Health
- ❖ Plan relocations carefully
- ❖ Update to account for changes

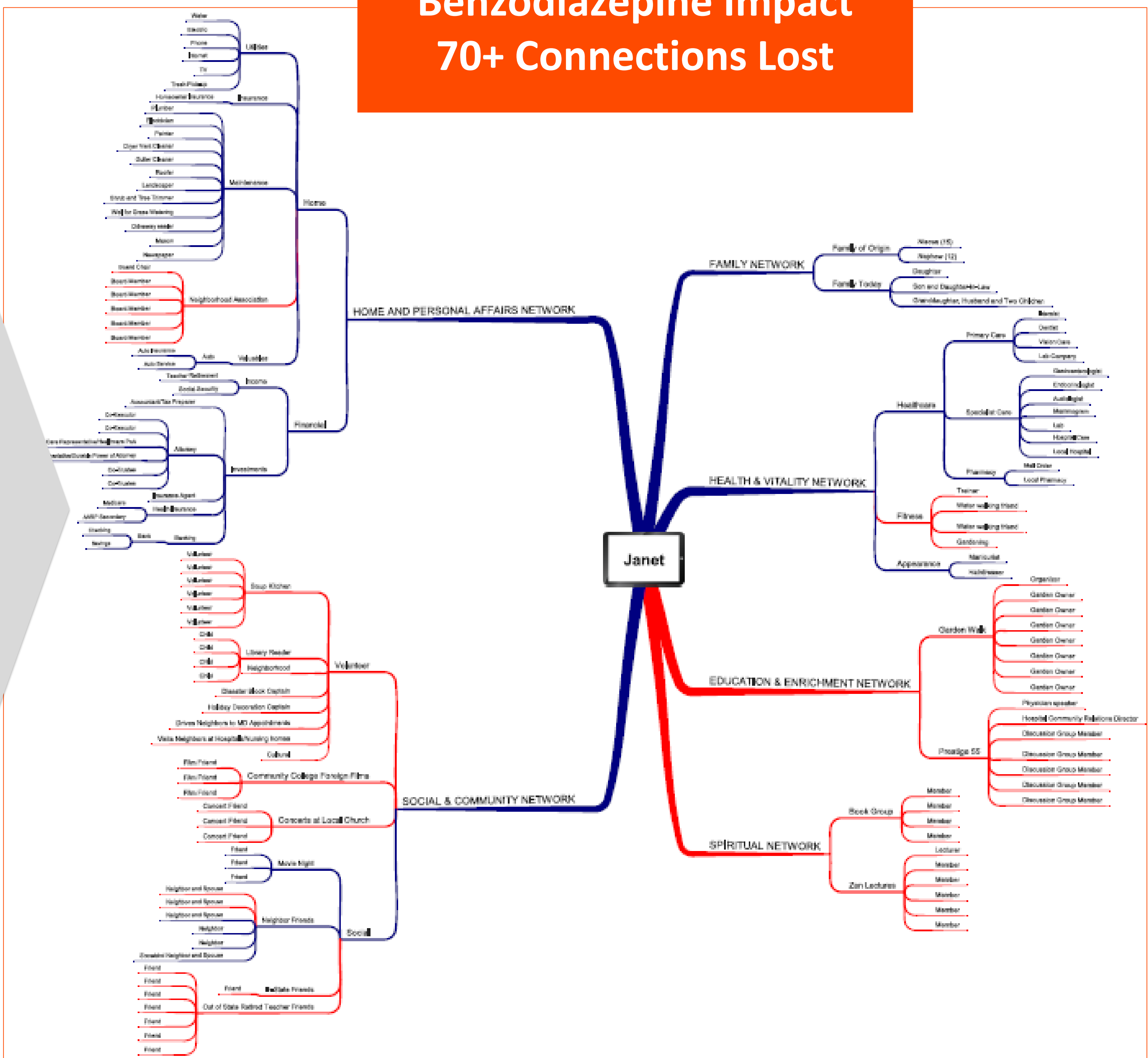


# Health Network failure

Before Insomnia  
140 Connections

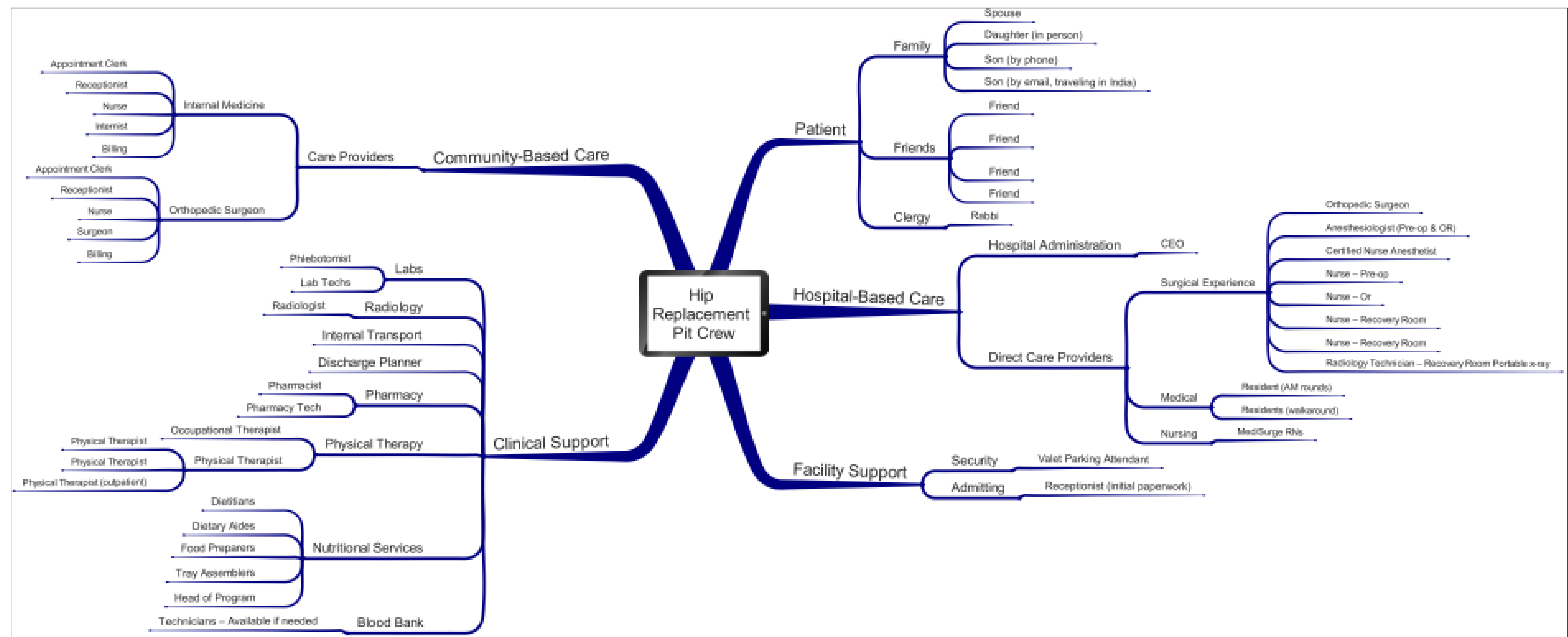


Benzodiazepine Impact  
70+ Connections Lost





# Event Network for a hip replacement

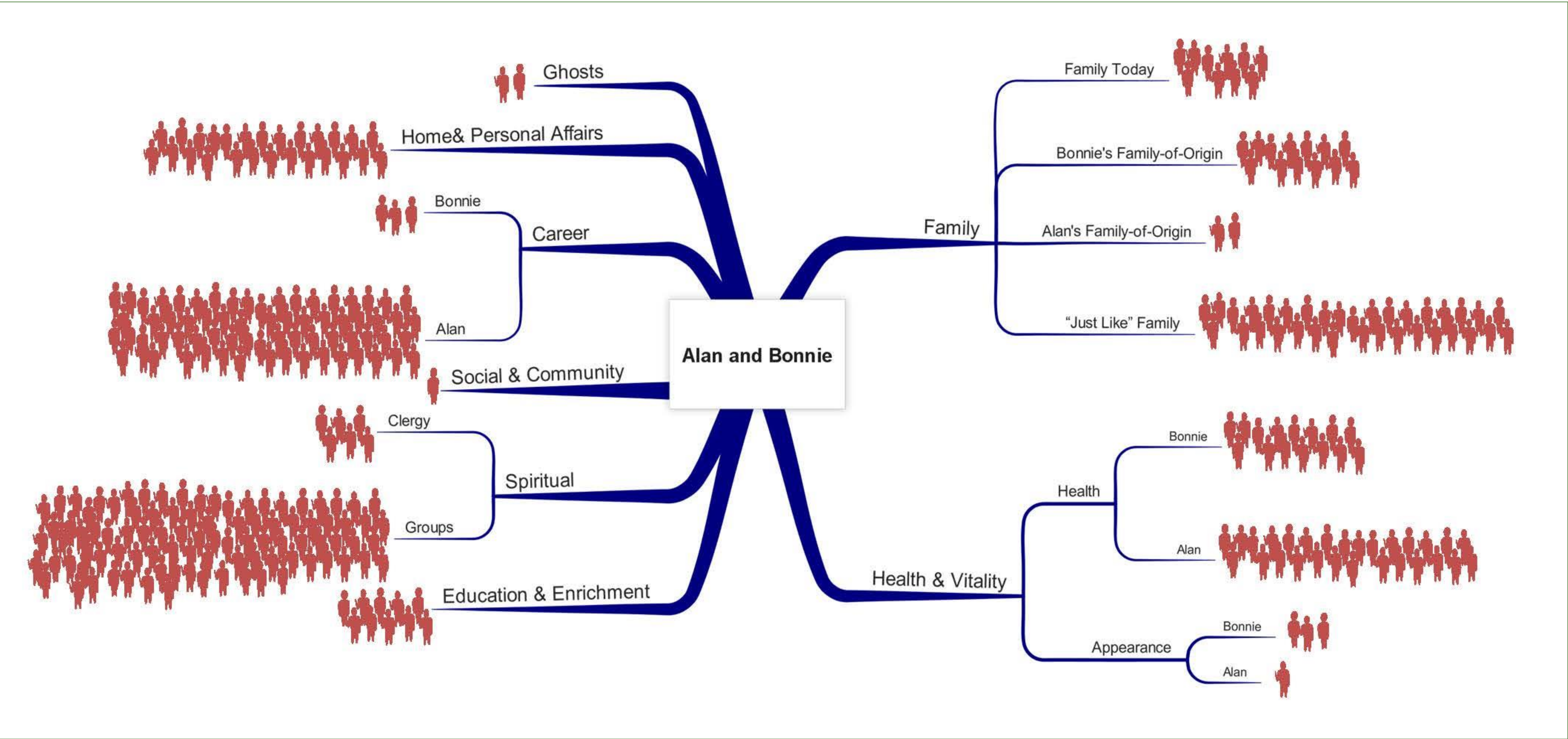


10 in-office connections  
40 in-hospital connections

- ❖ Family/Friends 3
- ❖ Care Providers 12
- ❖ Clinical Support 17
- ❖ Facility Support 2



# Life Networks at diagnosis of breast cancer

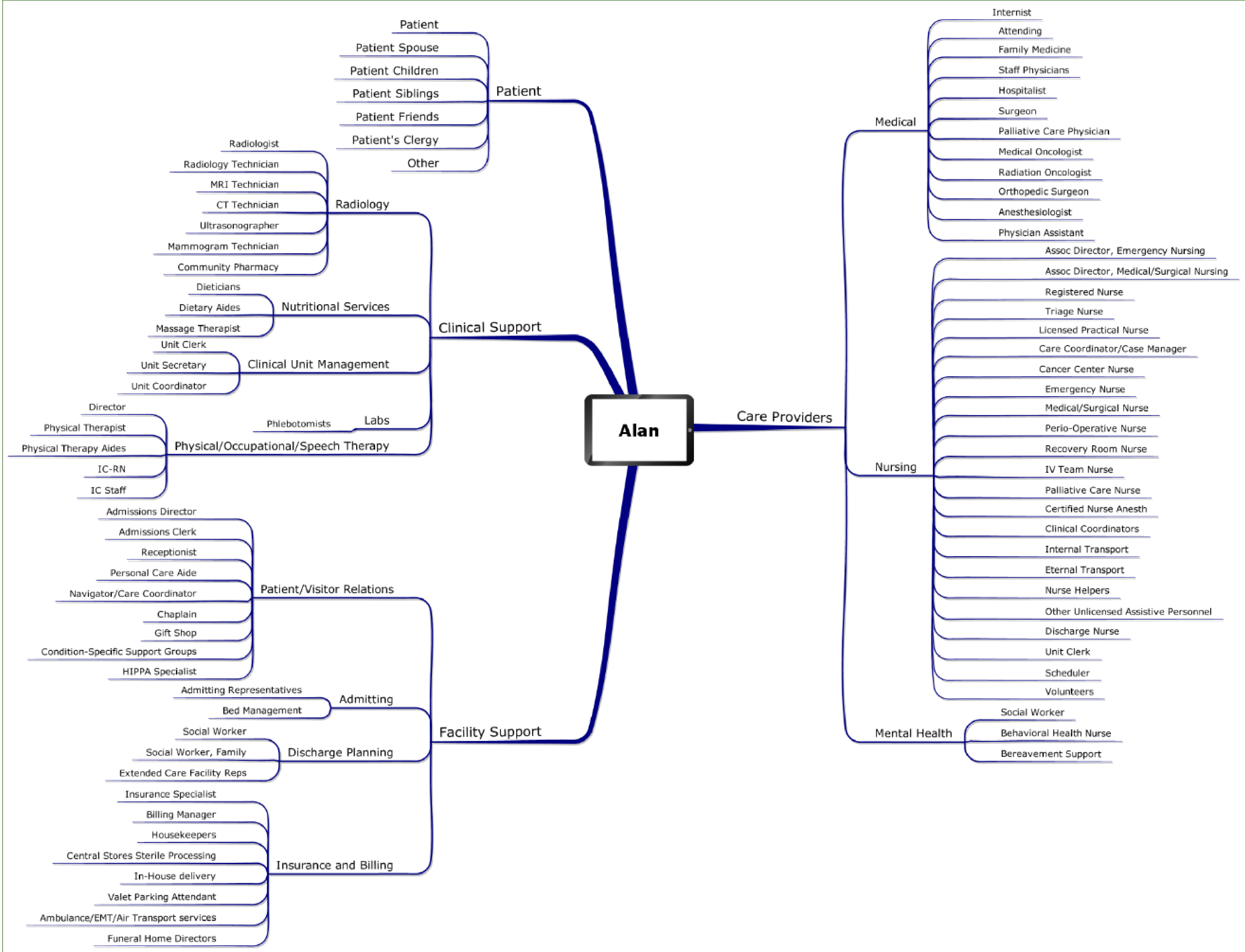


❖ 296-356 Total Connections

- ❖ 60 Family
- ❖ 52 Health/Vitality
- ❖ 10 Education/Enrichment
- ❖ 90-100 Spiritual
- ❖ 1 Social/Community
- ❖ 54-104 Career
- ❖ 27 Home/Personal Affairs
- ❖ 2 Ghost



# Event Network for breast cancer care



79 Connections to support Bonnie's in-hospital care

- ❖ 7 Family/Friends
- ❖ 38 Care Providers
- ❖ 19 Clinical Support
- ❖ 22 Facility Support



# Implications for solo agers



The NEW ENGLAND  
JOURNAL of MEDICINE

September 5, 2019

## Death by Stereotype? Cancer Treatment in Unmarried Patients

Joan DelFattore, Ph.D.

Joan DelFattore. **Death by Stereotype? Cancer Treatment in Unmarried Patients.** *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2019; 381 (10): 982 DOI: [10.1056/NEJMms1902657](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMms1902657)

- ❖ People with support have better cancer outcomes
- ❖ Physicians believe married status = support
- ❖ Physicians believe single people = *lack* support and the *will to live*
- ❖ Physicians don't offer newer, life-saving treatments to single patients as often as they do to married patients
- ❖ In the US, single adults now outnumber married adults





## *Intuitive Organizing Framework*

Event Networks  
Life Networks

## *Solo Aging Planning*

Become AWARE of your connections  
CLARIFY what you want and need  
Use insights to TAKE ACTION STEPS





# The networksage

Realize Your Network Superpower

GLENNA CROOKS, PhD



*To take advantage of the 15-minute  
consult offer, be in touch.*

*Glenna Crooks, PhD*  
*[Glenna@glennacrooks.com](mailto:Glenna@glennacrooks.com)*