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## BOOK REVIEW

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### “Connected: The Amazing Power of Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives”

by Nicholas Christakis & James Fowler

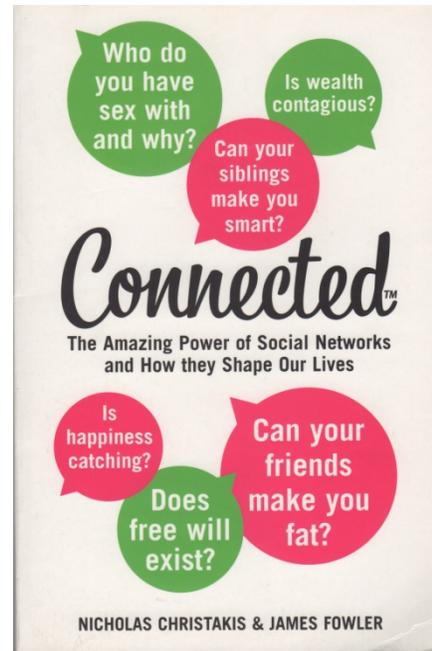
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This is a thoroughly researched and a well-written book that addresses issues related to complex social relationships between people who know each other, as well as people who do not know each other. Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler put their brilliant minds together and co-authored this highly engaging book after a number of years of research on the subject of social behavior. During their research, they came to understand that an individual's behavior can be changed even by persons that he/she have never met personally. *Connected* is a book that is aimed at providing an

accessible and lively synopsis of how social networks work, as well as why they matter in today's society.

By reading this book, you will come to understand how network-thinking can help a person to understand even better the things that are around him/her. Christakis and Fowler agree that the key to understanding people is to be aware of the ties between them in the first place. These two authors demonstrate how social networks have an intense effect on how people think, behave and live. They have also outlined how interactions of different people have a direct influence on how the connected individuals will behave. During their research, they found out that an individual can be more influenced by their friends' friends than by their close friends.

According to Christakis and Fowler, human society forms a network that parallels other networks found in science. They believe that Human networks can even become more complex than those found in technology or in nature. This means that, human networks can even assume an organic form of their own. These two authors also acknowledge that understanding both the significance and influence of social networks can change the perception of an individual's control over one's life. They also recognize that interconnectedness is a fundamental force in an individual's life.

There are a number of social issues that can be addressed through human networks, some of them being fighting the spread of diseases, fighting against racism, inspiring more people to vote, fighting loneliness through online dating and establishing business ties among many others. Social networks have become a powerful tool that influence people's health, leadership, safety and happiness among many other things. It also affects our careers and our beliefs in either positive or negative ways.

One of the important lessons that you will find in this book is that we tend to become just like the people we spent most of our time with. Human networking influences our expectations and determines the kind of people we end up with for life, the sort of jobs we get and the kind of livelihood we lead. Connections also affect our emotions, basically through spreading of information between persons, whereby there are those that are more susceptible than others. The book also indicates that, if one

happens to associate him/herself with a group of unhappy people, then he/she is more likely to be unhappy.

Research also indicated that politics can be influenced greatly by social networks. Politicians have taken advantage of the platform provided for by these networks to reach a wider audience. They not only get the chance to convince more voters, but they also get a chance to raise increased amounts of money for their campaigns from those with whom they are connected. The more connection one has with people, the more influence one tends to have and the greater likelihood that he/she can be better placed to win an election.

*Connected* is a book is rich in insights and it is an excellent read to anyone who is looking for a deeper study that is science-based in regard to human connectedness. The authors have provided gripping evidence that social networks play a major role in human experience. They have also indicated how network interactions can have intense effects on the lives of the people involved. That's not all! They have also given examples to support their thesis. In a world where many people are involved in many social networks, it is vital for people to understand how they should behave and interact with one another. This book is very well researched and is not only a powerful guide, but it also helps people to understand how their interactions can affect the global economy.

(Dr Darryl is a clinical and organizational psychologist as well as a credentialed executive and personal coach. He is also an author, international speaker and university lecturer. Dr Darryl assists people to find their strengths and reach their goals. Further information on Dr Darryl can be accessed from [www.DrDarryl.com](http://www.DrDarryl.com).)