

From: Edith Yoder, Bridge of Hope <edithy@bridgeofhopeinc.org>

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Subject: Do you hold to the myth of self-sufficiency?

August 2024



CHURCHES RESPOND. HOMELESSNESS ENDS. HOPE BEGINS.



The myth of self-sufficiency is the idea that people can make it on their own and survive without the help of others.

It leads to competing catch phrases in our society: from “No man [or woman] is an island” contrasted with “pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps.”

When I first began working at Bridge of Hope, the social services world loved using the language of “self-sufficiency.” How much money did you need to earn to be self-sufficient? How could we help a single mom to become self-sufficient?

Today, across society, it is dawning on us that this great myth of self-sufficiency isn’t God’s plan for the world, nor is it healthy to be disconnected and without supports.

“The logic of self-sufficiency is a logic of loneliness,” writes Amy Julia Becker, in her book *White Picket Fences*.

“God places the lonely into families,” the Psalmist writes. God’s vision is one of connection with one another and in fact, prideful independence is a sin named frequently in scripture.

The grand vision of the New Testament (check out Revelation 7!) describes a new community that transcends economic status, ethnicity, culture and language. The old dividing lines of housed or homeless, black or white, middle class or poor, unemployed or employed are transformed in the realization of God's intention for humankind. By being a community of hope, healing and renewal, we become a part of God's ultimate desire for the world.

Thirty years ago, at Bridge of Hope, our program goal was self-sufficiency for moms we serve. But who among us can make it alone? Today, our language reflects a deeper understanding of God's hope for community and connection for all of us.

Today our 3 goals for families facing homelessness are:

- Safe and sustainable housing
- Strong and resilient families
- Supportive neighboring relationships.

We desire to see healthy connections and support, not boot-strapping independence but mutual interdependence. And it's a beautiful thing to see, as connections forge relationships that build the bridge out of homelessness!

Let's keep building bridges of connection,

Edith Yoder
Chief Executive Officer



Your support of Bridge of Hope is making an impact! Learn more about the work of Bridge of Hope in our 2023-24 fiscal year in our [Annual Impact Report](#).

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