

Community

Today there are many media sources that focus on telling the success story of an individual instead of a group that succeeds together. Netflix's drama *The Walking Dead*, which aired from October of 2010 until November of 2022, is a show that focuses on the importance of community within society. Rick Grimes leads a group of survivors out of Atlanta in hopes of finding a cure to the disease that has turned loved ones into zombies. Quickly the group discovers that there is no cure and now they must face this apocalyptic world. The group must decide what type of people they are going to be in this new world and what type of world they are going to try and build for the coming generations. The TV show is constantly changing the cast of the show and is always adding and subtracting characters into the major plot lines. *The Walking Dead* accurately represents the necessity for community within society.

People need to rely on others to survive. Since the beginning of time people have relied on one another to survive, because oftentimes there are times when you need someone else to fall back on when you are failing. *The Walking Dead* shows the lives of many characters who attempt to seek out a life of solitude in this apocalyptic world. However many of these characters are killed due to the lack of people being there to help each other survive. The TV also shows examples of people who do attempt and build a community, and oftentimes those people are much better off in the apocalypse because they have others to help them survive.

Being in a community not only gives people a support system to rely on but also a sense of belonging and a sense of being a part of something bigger. For many people this world is a place where finding your identity is hard, however being in a community gives people a sense of purpose and belonging. Many people in *The Walking Dead* are shown committing suicide due to the fact that they no longer see the purpose in living, because many people lose family and

friends during the apocalypse. However once people are a part of a community they find a purpose to survive for their new family and seek to build a life. One of the antagonists that is introduced into the show named Dwight attempts to kill himself, because he believes he is no longer needed in this world. However, after meeting the right people and receiving a second chance he turns his life around and gives others hope. Being a part of a community in the apocalyptic world for many people is the reason for their survival or their desire to survive.

Community is necessary for growth within society. Humans were once a species that were dominated by the world around them. However through many years humans learned to come together and dominate the world that had once dominated our species. Strickland writes, “In *The Walking Dead*, people eventually come out of the woodwork, from sheds, farms, apartments, and forests, to move from isolation to community. And they struggle as if it were the beginning of time” (Strickland). In many cases during *The Walking Dead* society only seems to improve when there is a community that supports the ideas on which society is being built. One of the main characters in the show Daryl Dixon attempts to live out a life in solitude, however he realizes that his life cannot improve if he continues seeking solitude. When he returns to the community he becomes one of the leaders within the community and changes society for the better. The show underlines the importance of needing community and a team effort to improve life for society. Without community society would be stuck in the mud and not progressing, because people who are alone cannot progress society in the same way a community can.

Community is needed for a society to truly thrive. A group of people are able to complete a task quicker than a single person. Community in a society allows for groups of people to come together and tackle the challenges that face society together. In doing so, the community allows for society to be better than before. In many of the communities, shown in the 11 seasons of the

show's runtime, people are described as being a resource and the most valued thing in the apocalypse. The Savivors who are one of the many communities in the show discuss this idea a lot in their screen time. The group is brought into the show to be the “big bad.” However, one of the things this community accurately expresses is the necessity for people in this world and that the wasting of life would be the downfall to the new world they are trying to build. The skills and manpower that people provide majorly impact the success of each community within the TV show. People allow for communities to build stronger walls, find resources, plant crops, etc... The lack of people within a community is often when a community begins to fail and when a community is flush they often have many people who are starving for the same goal of survival.

Strong connections to others gives people a reason to try and be better for those around them. A strong force for many people in our world is the feeling that comes from not wanting to disappoint those whom you look up to. People do not want to disappoint those around them, and instead want to succeed for them. For many of the many characters in *The Walking Dead* the desire to survive and fight for a better world is due to their relations with other characters in the show. Carl Grimes who is one of the lead characters in the show is killed because he was trying to help another person who was alone. His character shows the audience how much the connections with others matter in society. *The Walking Dead* does an excellent job underlying the idea that the characters in the show are attempting to build a better world for generations that will come after them.

Without community a person will always put themselves over the others around them. A society in which everyone only does what best benefits them is one which is set to fail. One person's needs will always need to be placed above others and thus no progress can be made. In

The Walking Dead one of the main characters named Negan learns that he cannot set himself above the others around him. He learns this through slaughtering many of the audience's favorite characters and many years in isolation. Negan is shown a new way of life through the character Judith Grimes and his second wife whom he meets in the apocalyptic world. Without the idea of community being at the forefront of everyone's minds, society is almost guaranteed to fail, because no one will try to improve life for all and only themselves.

The Walking Dead accurately represents the necessity for community within society. Many media sources focus on an individual's life instead of a group of people. *The Walking Dead* clearly depicts the story of a new society that is built through community and relying on others to survive. I have found that I am often a better and happier person when I have a strong community around me, however when that community fades I tend to do worse. Community is necessary for anyone in society regardless of whether they are living in a post apocalyptic world or not.

Works Cited

Strickland, Danielle. "What 'The Walking Dead' Teaches Us about Community." *Praise.Com*,
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