

We need an economics of the warm and friendly hug

Published: January 12, 2026, 10:12 pm

Aditya Chakrabortty [has written a profound and compelling article for the Guardian today](#). It's headlines say:

Loneliness is an inevitable result of Britain's economic model

The health secretary wants adults to look after their elderly parents to combat loneliness, as Asian people do. But Jeremy Hunt is wrong on who loneliness affects, wrong on what causes it, and wrong on what's happening in Asia

Aditya is right: as he says:

The flipside of economic individualism is loneliness. And as that model has been exported around the world, even traditionally family-centred cultures have started to crumble.

Everywhere that seems to be true. We live in the era of the economics of the self and yet so many crave for the economics of the warm and friendly hug that this world seems so intent on denying them.

That's the economics that recognises a person's worth, and not their cost.

And which values their contribution, and not the burden they impose.

It's the thinking that says each person has potential and we have to seek to help them fulfil it, and not consign them to a minimum wage paid by an agency that only seeks to exploit them.

Most of all, it's the economics that says we live, work, socialise and ultimately survive in community, and not alone.

It's very far from neoliberalism. That's an economics built on contempt for all others. The world needs economics built on care for others.

It's as profound as that.