

## The Importance of Community

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**D**o you remember the story *The Three Little Pigs*? It is one of the most famous children's stories of all time, but it actually teaches a very important lesson. The story is about three pigs brothers who decide to live near each other and build their new homes out of different materials. One pig used sticks, one used hay, and the other used bricks. They had a good time living next to each other until Big, Bad Wolf finds their homes and tries to eat them, one by one. When he huffs and puffs and blows the first home down, the pig immediately runs to find shelter nearby at his brother's. Then, the wolf goes to the next house and when he blows that house down, the two brothers run quickly to safety with the third brother. It is clear that the brothers are loyal and willing to help each other. The third brother's home is built with brick so the hungry wolf can't blow it down. Instead, he climbs down the chimney to get the three juicy pigs. To his surprise he lands in a boiling pot of water and the pigs, safe, sound, and together - victorious! This story illustrates the importance of having a community nearby that you can rely on - to give help and receive it - when you really need it.

When the pigs left home originally, they could have decided to live far away from each other. Instead, they chose to live very close to each other. In the story, they have fun times - dancing and singing - before the wolf comes to eat them. Of course it's important to be near loved ones to celebrate and enjoy each other, but it's also important to be nearby in case of an emergency. In this story, the pigs survived only because they had their brotherly community nearby when they needed it.

Having family and friends nearby is great, but you also need to be able to give and receive help from those people to get by during difficult times. At three different occasions in the story, the pigs relied on each other for help in outsmarting the wolf and each time the brothers were there for each other. Of course, by offering help, the pigs needed to make a sacrifice. The space in their house became more cramped and they were drawing the wolf's attention to the next house. That didn't keep the brothers from helping each other. Each time the brother let them in. If they weren't willing to give and receive help, the wolf would have surely gobbled them up.

In conclusion, the children's story of *The Three Little Pigs* isn't only for children. It teaches a lesson for people of all ages: Having a reliable community nearby will help you get through the hard times in your life. The pigs were smart when they, knowing that the wolf lived in the woods nearby, chose to live next door to each other. Then, when trouble came knocking, they were able to ask for help and also willing to give it. If they hadn't developed this brotherly community, the story would have ended with a very satisfied wolf licking the bacon grease from his smiling lips.