

EDITORS' PICK

For Wellness And Happiness, Study Shows That Conversation Is Key

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I write about happiness, work-life fulfillment and the future of work.

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One conversation per day can boost happiness. GETTY

Wellbeing is a challenge. People are struggling with stress, suffering with unhappiness and wishing for greater health.

But a new study demonstrates an amazingly simple way to boost your wellness and your happiness: Have a face-to-face conversation with a friend or colleague once per day.

Wellbeing On the Rocks

Plenty of people report they don't have friends and lack quality relationships. From people saying they [don't have a friend at work](#) to people reporting they're lonely and [struggling with mental health](#), wellbeing is on the rocks.

And making friends and sustaining [relationships definitely takes investment](#). Research by Jeffrey Hall, a University of Kansas professor of communication studies, finds that it takes about 40-60 hours of time together to build a casual friendship and about 200 hours for a close friendship.

But you can apparently contribute to your sense of connection, belonging and happiness with even less. Just one conversation a day with a friend or teammate can make a difference, according to the study by the [University of Kansas](#).

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Just Catch Up

People often think of great relationships as being built on deep trust, meaningful interactions and soul-searching discussions. And these definitely count. But interestingly, the research found even quick, more superficial contact was positive.

When you catch up quickly, you stay in touch with what's going on for people and you have a basis to check in the next time. You learn your teammate has just made an offer on a house, and you ask about it the next time you see them. Or you find out their child was just accepted to college, and you can check in on the transition process when you run into them again. Or they share that they've put in for a new job, and you can offer your support.

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Relationships are built on continuity and familiarity—so the more you know, the more you can build. And every tidbit you learn about them or they learn about you is a deposit in a bank of understanding each other.

So, catch up quickly on the elevator or send a brief email to check in. Or make a phone call to a friend during your commute time to let someone know you're thinking of them.



Focusing on others and their needs is a pathway to happiness. GETTY

Focus on Others

[Happiness is correlated with focusing on others](#), more than yourself. In this study, listening, showing care and valuing others made a contribution to wellbeing as well. Ask questions about how someone is doing, be present and focused, and demonstrate you respect and support them.

Complimenting others was also a contributor—so focus on what you sincerely appreciate about someone and express it.

Joke Around

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Social science research published in the *Journal of Research In Personality* also shows that teasing—when it happens in the context of a positive relationship—can also build friendships. This study too showed that joking around contributed to a sense of connection and wellbeing.

When you joke with someone about a situation, you're reinforcing common ground—something you can both laugh at or roll your eyes about. And if you tease in a constructive way, you're demonstrating you know and understand a person.

Of course, teasing must never be negative or disrespectful, but when you lighten up and laugh together it can help you bond and contribute to wellbeing for both of you.

Make It Easy

Sometimes, [finding wellbeing and enhancing wellness](#) can seem like monumental tasks. But it may be easier than you think—with quick contact, regular conversations and checking in with even one close friend each day.

Feeling connected and having a sense of belonging are significant determinants of all kinds of health—so it's worth the effort—for sure.

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15 August, 2023

Joking creates a sense of complicity, which promotes intimacy. It's a simple way to foster trust.

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24 July, 2023

What, rich people that get to hang out and make friends and talk are happier than slaves with no friends or ability to stop or talk to people or make friends. You mean rich people who get to hang out and talk are happier than isolated slaves with no one to talk too??? Cutting edge forbes research

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