
CONNECTING WITH OTHERS SUCCESSFULLY

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Better Connections with Others

Radiating contentment and happiness tells a love interest or a business partner that we are on a good path, which makes these encounters more rewarding for everyone involved. It also helps form bonds and relationships with other people. But communication is much more. It helps us attain the things we need, value and aspire to, either by asking someone directly or by effecting changes in the world, which ultimately get us these things.

The transfer of information always effects a change if the recipient sees the information as relevant and meaningful.(Haverkamp, 2010, 2017, 2018) This also means that interactions between partners are like a dance where one partner at the same time attempts to influence the interaction by formulating and sending a new message and maintains a high level of openness to receive meaningful information from the partner to the interaction. When this dynamic that depends on both partners unfolds, there will be a benefit to both.

In a number of situations there can be barriers to this type of open and beneficial communication. For example, bad experiences with open in the past can make it more difficult to trust the other person, which reduces the benefits from an interaction and might make it less meaningful if a range of topics cannot be addressed. The wider the flow of communication, the more benefits can come out of an interaction. This, however, does not mean that one should just absorb and accept all messages. Rather, it is important to be able to reflect and think about the messages, and to try to understand them, before moving on to the next pieces of information. This does not have to happen synchronously but can be at a later time.

Another barrier to combination may be communication strategies that no longer work effectively. Since not having preformed communication techniques and strategies would slow down an interaction

enormously and make any form of meaningful communication impossible, individuals over time accumulate a large set of communication strategies, patterns and techniques, which often stay in place until they no longer seem to work. However, in many situations, particularly when stress and other mental pressures are high, a disconnect from oneself may make it harder to see which strategies and patterns no longer work. As a result, maladaptive or even harmful interaction styles stay around longer than they should. But as one reconnects again with oneself, takes a step back from routine interactions, observes and reflects on them and gains greater insight into the dynamics, it becomes quite easy to distance oneself from the pattern which do not work and develop and assume the ones that do,

The better we can communicate with ourselves, the better we can communicate with other people. Openness and empathy help to understand others, but also show that one is at ease with oneself. Happiness is an important prerequisite to be able to engage in fulfilling interactions.

Happiness as an Emotion

Happiness is an emotion we often feel when we are engaged in something that is meaningful and valuable to us. When we are engaged in something that is meaningful, that contains the promise of something novel that can change us, we feel happiness. Whether solving a science problem, observing another person, having sex or talking to someone else, we are engaged in processes that produce new meaning, new information, and often a sense of happiness. Communication with oneself and others, the exchange of meaningful information, is ultimately what leads to more meaning and greater happiness.

Values, Wants and Needs

One's values and basic interests determine what is valuable to oneself. Happiness requires that one engages in an activity that is meaningful and of value to oneself. Engaging in these activities and situations brings more positive emotions, happiness, and a greater sense of fulfilment in life. Wants and Needs that create greater happiness correlate with one's values.

The Call of Happiness

Almost everyone strives for happiness in life, and the pursuit of happiness is enshrined in the US constitution and many other important documents, but many people feel it is beyond their reach. Some may suffer from a mental health condition like depression, which reduces the amplitude of one's felt emotions overall, including happiness, and may require treatment. A larger problem is possibly missing direction in life and decision-making, which often is a result of being disconnected from oneself. If one feels what is valuable and meaningful to oneself, this leads to actions and thoughts that generate greater happiness.

The Search for Things that Make Happy

Happiness begins with finding out what makes one happy. This does not have to be anything external. It can be things to think about or something interesting to read. It can also be meditation in silence. Many people feel the pressure from what they think the world expects of them. Simply internalizing external expectations will not bring happiness. My thoughts and actions have to make sense in relation to how I see myself and what I value. This self-image can be affected by mental health conditions like depression, but one's basic values seldom are.

The Stability of the Self and One's Values

Our values are mostly stable over time but meaning depends on the information we exchange with our environment, which again depends on how we communicate with ourselves and others. One can be happy in solitude, but this happiness depends on how I communicate with myself and the non-human world around me and on my interactions with the world when I am with others. Most people do need companionship once in a while.

Connecting the Inside and the Outside

Happiness is when we are connected to the inside and outside world, when we can communicate freely with both. Fears prohibit us from getting in touch with ourselves and others to the extent that can bring about happiness. Happiness is when an organization strives to be optimally adapted to itself and the environment, when it is changed by it and can change it in beneficial ways. This does not require great activity for humans. Even sitting in one's chair at home can bring about happiness, when we feel ourselves and the world around us. Everything contains information, a tree and even a stone. Humans on the other hand are great information processing systems and we send and receive information all the time. Happiness as an emotion is also a consequence of how we process information, of how we think, which is one reason why we need to take stock of how we process information on the inside (think) and how we process information on the outside (interact with others). Happiness thus depends to a great extent on how we arrange our surroundings and ourselves in these surroundings.

Values and Meaning lead to Greater Happiness

Focusing on one's values and finding meaning in things leads to greater happiness. This does not have to be time consuming. It just requires doing what feels important, which can be a radically new way of doing things.

Connecting with Others

Greater happiness helps to communicate with others in a more meaningful, more open, and more rewarding way. It can have a ripple on effect, when the people we interact with become happier themselves, which is a great gift one can make to people one cares about.



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