

people into your life

10 ways to bring

connect

How to



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The quality of our relationships with other people is one of the most important factors contributing to our well-being – if not the most important. Loneliness and isolation can be bad for our physical and mental health, so it is important to know how to build a sense of connection with other people. Even the simplest and smallest moments of connection – like saying hello to our neighbours – can make us feel better about ourselves, give us a sense of purpose and give us more opportunities for getting on in life.

How can we connect better with other people?

The poster on the other side of this leaflet provides a list of things you can do to build more links with other people. They are just initial ideas to get you started. Check out the Life² website for more ideas and links to organisations that can help you to live a happier, wiser and more meaningful life – www.lifesquared.org.uk

1. Give people time

Your life may be busy, but making time to engage properly with people is the first step to connecting with them better. Allow yourself the time to chat with the local shopkeeper, call your family or to stay on the phone a bit longer with your friends.

2. Meet your neighbours

It may seem an obvious point, but many of us don't do it. When you move somewhere new or when you see new neighbours moving in, go round and introduce yourself. Invite them round. Organise a get-together for the residents of your street – just to meet and catch up with each other.

3. Shop locally

Shopping doesn't have to be just about buying stuff - it can also be an opportunity to build social networks, enjoy your local area and find out about what is going on nearby. Visiting the shops in your local high street can be a far more sociable and relaxed affair than visiting a huge out-of-town supermarket.

4. Talk to people

A radical suggestion! Break down the barriers of social convention that isolate us from each other by starting conversations with people – even if you don't know them. Treat the world

as your community – a public place where you meet people and converse. Instigating a conversation in this way may feel slightly odd at first, but it will quickly pay off and bring you a lot of pleasure.

5. Offer help and ask for help

Both of these are useful ways of strengthening ties with people (whether they are friends, colleagues, neighbours or strangers) and also help to build a general sense that we can count on each other.

6. Volunteer

A wide range of opportunities exists for volunteering, covering a large number of topics, including nature conservation, helping the elderly and joining local campaign groups. This can not only provide a chance to meet people but also give one a great sense of purpose and fulfilment from helping others.

7. Be curious

Being interested in the people and world around you should not be a trait that is confined to children. Adults can become rather inward-looking, so try to rediscover your sense of interest and curiosity in the people and the world around you, and ask people questions – everyone has something interesting to say if you look carefully.

8. Start or join a local group

Check your local papers and websites for what's on in your area. If none of it interests you, then why not set up a social group yourself? You could organise a regular evening in a local pub where everyone is invited simply to socialise, meet new people and share news and ideas. All you need to do is find a venue, set a date and publicise it, and people will come!

9. Exercise

Joining a local sport club or exercise group can not only make you more motivated to do exercise but can also put you in touch with lots of other people with similar interests.

10. Unplug your television

TV can give us a sense of connection if we're isolated, but it can also stop us from doing other things - like making real connections with people. Even if you aren't very mobile, you can turn off the TV and pick up the phone!

