

Investing in Social Relations

Happy people have very good relationships. They have good marriages, are satisfied with their social life, and get emotional and practical support from family, friends and colleagues. The relationship between happiness and good social relationships goes both ways, they influence each other. Better social relationships increase your happiness. Being happy makes you more likely to improve your relationships. Social relationships provide us support in difficult times. This can be practical support (bringing you to the doctor), emotional support (helping to get another perspective on a situation) or informational support (giving financial advice).

These are 4 things you could do to use 'investing in social relationships' as a strategy to become happier:

1. Make time for your loved ones. Spending time together, and talking to each other can be made into a cherished ritual. Make sure that you are not distracted by children, technology, etc.
2. Express your admiration, appreciation and affection towards each other. In a good relationship, the ratio positive - negative affect should be 5 to 1, for everything negative you say, there should be 5 positive things. By actively expressing things that you admire (I am so proud that you did this), you can increase the amount of positive things you communicate.
3. Enjoy other people's successes. When your friends / family / partner is successful, try to wholeheartedly be happy for them, and celebrate with them. Personal triumphs and windfalls of others can be intimidating. You might become jealous (she thinks her job is more important than I am) or anxious (do we have to move again?). Try to catch yourself when you have these feelings and try to react actively and constructively instead.
4. Share your inner self. Be vulnerable. That helps the other to be vulnerable too. Share your dreams and your goals. The other can then try to help you to achieve these.