

Happiness: All in who you know, goals

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An Indiana University study that compared strategies used by extroverted college students and their less socially inclined peers found that happy people who are less outgoing relied less on partying and drinking to be happy and more on connections with family and friends or cognitive strategies, such as positive thinking.

"You don't have to go out and party to be happy. That's the thing students feel they need to do, particularly when they're new to campus," said Bernardo J. Carducci, director of the Shyness Research Institute at Indiana University Southeast. "But, it's critical to maintain contacts with family, with friends and like-minded individuals with whom you feel some sort of meaningful connection. That could be other people in clubs that you belong to, like the accounting club, astronomy club . . . people you play intramural sports with."

A second study, also conducted by Carducci, found that college students who are goal-oriented also tend to be happier than their less focused peers.

"When you look at what these people do differently, people who strive to reach [personal goals](#), they engage in more purposeful leisure, rather than sitting around and [watching television](#)," Carducci said. "They don't go clubbing as much as the others. They spend more time on what we call spiritual reflection. They write in journals. These are the kinds of people who tend to be more happy. These also are the people who mostly graduate from college."

About the studies:

- Carducci's study "Self-Selected Strategies for Seeking [Happiness](#) by Individuals with High Happiness and Low Social Affiliation: A Look at Being HHIPe" was discussed in August at the American Psychological Association's annual meeting. Co-author was Rebecca S. Moody, an IU Southeast undergraduate psychology major. The study "Instrumental Goal Pursuit as an Individual-Difference Dimension in the Seeking of Subjective Well-Being" was discussed in June at the Biennial Meeting of the Association for Research in Personality. Co-author is Benjamin D. Traugher, an IU Southeast undergraduate psychology major.
- Both studies involved 337 undergraduate students who completed an online survey that measured aspects of happiness, social affiliation, and drive to reach goals. The survey included the Satisfaction with Life Scale, Positive/Negative Affect Scale, and a 44-item Survey of Happiness Strategies.

Carducci said it would be useful for student advisers to know where students rate on Instrumental Goal Pursuit.

"With this measure, you can look at people who are low and realize you need to keep an eye on them," Carducci said. "They might need help learning how to develop goals. They might need help learning how to delay instant gratification."

Provided by Indiana University

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