

Close Relationships

The Science of Happiness: Theory and Practice

Close Relationships

Habit - 1



Close Relationships



“If you go looking for a friend, you’re going to find they’re very scarce. If you go out to be a friend, you’ll find them all over the place.”

- *Zig Ziglar*

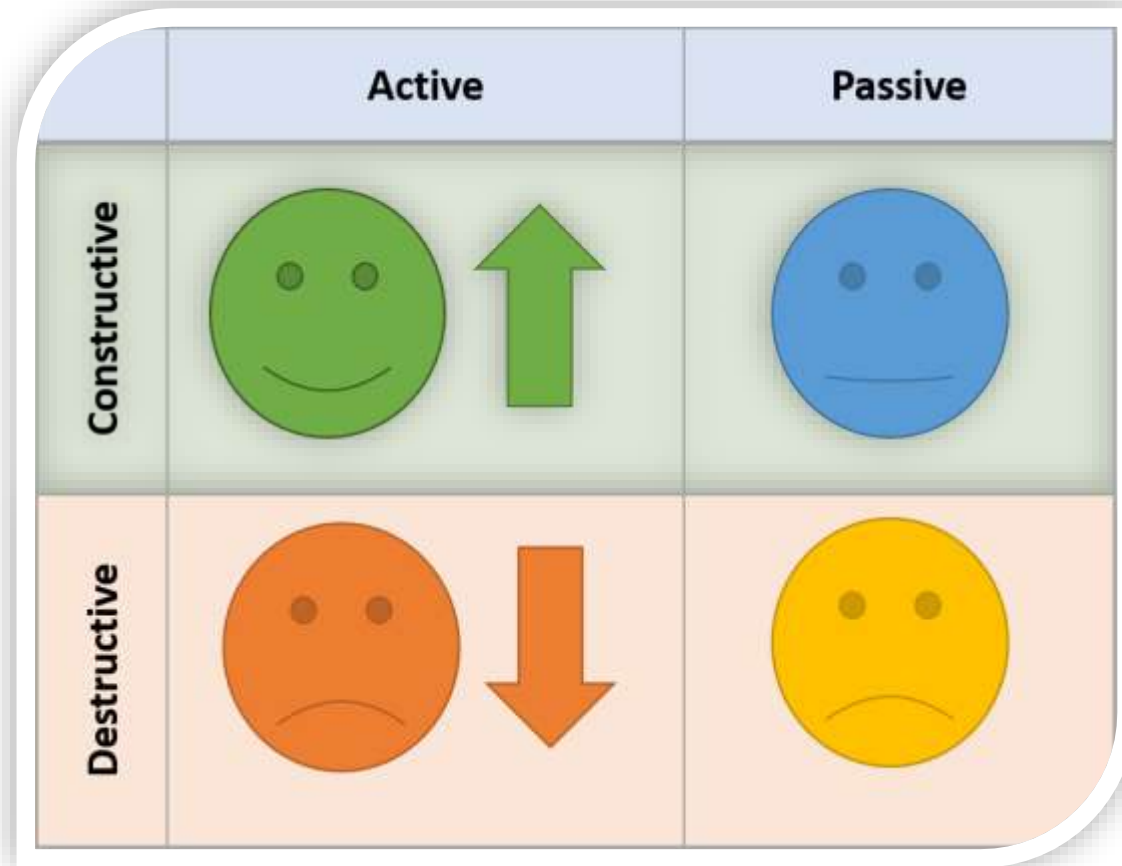
The Harvard Study



- Study followed two groups, Harvard graduates, and Boston inner city residents, for 80 years
 - Relationships with family and friends are a top correlate of well-being.
 - They impact physical as well as psychological well-being.

Active Constructive Listening

How do you respond if someone wants to share great news?



4 types of response (Gable)

- Active-constructive
- Passive-constructive
- Active-destructive
- Passive-destructive

Active Constructive Listening

Example: How do you respond if someone has bought a new car?

Active-constructive:

The responder is interested and supportive. He or she might say, "That's brilliant news! I'm so pleased for you. Can I have a look?"

Passive-constructive:

He seems positive but his response is muted and with no enquiry. He says, "That's nice," with no real interest or enthusiasm.

Active-destructive:

In this scenario, she actively belittles your good news, focusing on any negative implications. She might say, "Seriously? Knowing you, I guess you wrecked the old one!"

Passive-destructive:

He barely acknowledges you're announcement or changes the subject. A typical response might be, "I see. Anyway, guess who I saw on my way in?"

Active Constructive Listening Example



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRORihbXMnA&t=1s>

Active Constructive Listening: Group Exercise



Self-disclosure



“Courage is vulnerability. Vulnerability is courage. Like shadow and light, neither one can exist without the other.”

– *Wai Lan Yuen*

- The ability to express one’s heart is a key to wellbeing. It’s OK to show vulnerability!
- Sharing activities and active listening facilitate natural self-disclosure.

Social Media: A Two-edged Sword



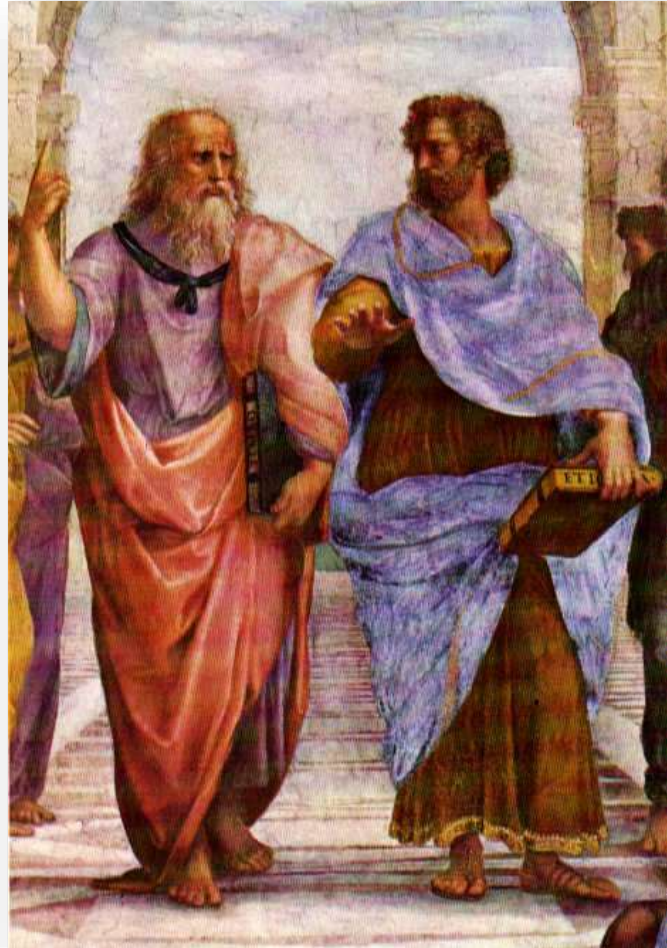
Social media habits that promote wellbeing:

- One-to-one communication
- Self-disclosure (mainly between real-world friends).

Social media habits that increase depression:

- Social comparison (“Facebook envy”)
 - Mirages in the social media desert: why are my friends happier and more popular than me?
- Mindless scrolling / “like” counting

Aristotle on Friendship



Three Kinds of Friendship

- Friendship of utility
 - Easiest to find. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours
- Friendship of pleasure
 - Mutual attraction involved
- Friendship of virtue
 - Takes time and effort
 - Loving someone for their own sake

Close Relationships: Key Points



- People who have one or more close relationships with friends and family are happier
- Quantity doesn't seem to matter
- What matters is:
 - Frequency of cooperation in activities
 - Active-constructive listening
 - Self-disclosure

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