

Executive Digest

From the Executive Coaching Centre



Give and be happier

Human beings are the most social animal on the planet. Only a tiny number of other animals (termites, ants, wasps, bees and naked mole rats) build social networks as complex as ours. Many scientists believe that this social networking is what has caused our brains to triple in size in just two million years¹. Our profoundly social nature is a major cause of happiness.

Research shows that almost anything we do to improve our social networks tends to improve our happiness. One study asked a large sample of Americans to rate their happiness and to report how much money they spent in a typical month on (1) bills and expenses, (2) gifts for themselves, (3) gifts for others, and (4) donations to charity. Personal spending, the first two categories, were found to be unrelated to happiness but people who gave more to others were happier, and this was true no matter what the person's income level.

Although the benefits of giving to others have been clearly demonstrated across cultures, most people do not see it this way. Research suggests that most people make the error of thinking that spending money on themselves would make them happier than spending on others.

One very worthwhile charity that I have worked with for many years is [Artists Alliance](#). The organisation assists the professional development of artists and arts workers and promotes the creative sector throughout New Zealand. On April 29 they have organised a trip to the internationally renowned sculpture park Gibbs Farm. Funds raised will support their work.

If you want a fun adventure and to improve your happiness please follow the link: <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2016/gibbs-farm-artists-alliance-fundraiser/auckland/makarau>

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¹ <http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/danielgilbert/files/if-money-doesnt-make-you-happy.nov-12-20101.pdf>