

Vocabulary: mental health 词汇: 心理健康

‘It’s good to talk’, so some people say. When I commute into London, there are certainly plenty of people **conversing** on their mobile phones – sometimes too loudly – discussing and sharing personal details with a friend. For me, it’s strange that they talk as though the person is sitting next to them, when they don’t even acknowledge the person who is actually sitting beside them.

Many of us spend part of each day surrounded by strangers, whether on our daily commute, or sitting in a park or a cafe. But most of them remain just that – strangers. However, new evidence has shown that **plucking up the courage to strike up** a conversation might be good for our health.

Nicholas Epley from the University of Chicago and Juliana Schroeder from the University of California are behavioural scientists. They looked at this silent relationship and whether **solitude** is a more positive experience than **interacting** with strangers, or if people misunderstand the consequences of distant **social connections**. They found that many people feel **uncomfortable** and **intimidated** talking to others and their research suggested that when we make an initial conversation “we consistently **underestimate** how much a new person likes us.” It seems we carry a **negative voice** in our head telling us all the things that could go wrong and why someone wouldn’t want to converse with us.

Their research involved an experiment with a group of Chicago commuters and found that “every participant in our experiment who actually tried to talk to a stranger found the person sitting next to them was happy to **chat**.” From this and other research, the conclusion is that **connecting with** strangers is surprisingly pleasant and it has a positive impact on our **wellbeing**. Gillian Sandstrom, a social psychologist from Essex University in the UK, told the BBC that “people are in a better **mood** after they reach out and have a conversation, however minimal.” It’s true that talking can make you feel happier and happiness can lead to better mental health.

However, if you're an **introvert**, the thought of speaking to someone new might make you **anxious**. But the American research found "both **extroverts** and introverts are happier when they are asked to behave in an extroverted manner." So maybe, if you're a loner, it's time to **come out of your shell** and make some **small talk** with a stranger – it could be the beginning of a new friendship.

词汇表

converse	交谈，对话
pluck up the courage	鼓起勇气
strike up	开始（交谈）
solitude	独处
interact	交往，交流
social connections	社会关系
uncomfortable	不舒服的，难受的
intimidated	发怵的，害怕的
underestimate	低估
negative voice	（头脑里）负面的声音，消极的思想
chat	聊天
connect with	与.....建立良好的关系
wellbeing	健康
mood	心情
introvert	性格内向的人
anxious	焦虑的
extroverts	性格外向的人
come out of your shell	变得不再自闭，融入外部世界
(make) small talk	闲聊，寒暄

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. According to the article, how can talking to a stranger be better for our health?

2. Why might we not want to speak to a stranger?

3. True or false? *Commuters in Chicago involved in a social experiment found that people they sat next to were willing to talk to them.*

4. In another experiment, in what way did introverts behave that made them happier?

5. What could help start the beginning of a new friendship?

2. 请在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. Our train broke down and we were stuck on board for hours, so I decided to _____ a conversation with the other passengers.

interacting	connecting	strike up	small talk
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2. We _____ how much it would cost to move house and now we're broke!

underestimate	underestimated	underestimating	underestimates
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3. When I started university, I was _____ by the clever and talented people I was surrounded by – but now most of them are my friends.

anxious	introverted	intimidated	negative voice
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4. Our intern was quite nervous when he started but now he's _____ and fits in really well.

come out of his shell	coming out of his shell	came out of his shell	shelled out
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5. Dan is definitely an _____ - every time we go out, he's the first to get up and sing at the karaoke bar!

introvert	negative voice	extrovert	mood
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答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. According to the article, how can talking to a stranger be better for our health?
Talking to strangers can put you in a good mood and make you feel happier, and happiness can lead to better mental health.

2. Why might we not want to speak to a stranger?
We carry a negative voice in our head telling us all the things that could go wrong and why a stranger wouldn't want to converse with us.

3. True or false? *Commuters in Chicago involved in a social experiment found that people they sat next to were willing to talk to them.*
True. An experiment with a group of Chicago commuters found that "every participant in our experiment who actually tried to talk to a stranger found the person sitting next to them was happy to chat."

4. In another experiment, in what way did introverts behave that made them happier?
American research found "both extroverts and introverts are happier when they are asked to behave in an extroverted manner."

5. What could help start the beginning of a new friendship?
Reaching out and making small talk with a stranger could be the beginning of a new friendship.

2. 请在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. Our train broke down and we were stuck on board for hours, so I decided to **strike up** a conversation with the other passengers.

2. We **underestimated** how much it would cost to move house and now we're broke!

3. When I started university, I was **intimidated** by the clever and talented people I was surrounded by – but now most of them are my friends.

4. Our intern was quite nervous when he started, but now he's **come out of his shell** and fits in really well.

5. Dan is definitely an **extrovert** - every time we go out, he's the first to get up and sing at the karaoke bar!