

 Published in Big Ideas



Texas McCombs

Nov 18, 2021 · 2 min read ·  Listen



# To Deepen Connections, Skip the Small Talk

Want to build relationships and feel happier? New research suggests we get personal.

Based on the research of Amit Kumar




**W**hen was the last time you cried in front of someone?

I know we've just met, so maybe that question seems a bit personal.

 56 |  1 | 

Get unlimited access

 Search




Texas McCombs


2.6K Followers



News, business research, and ideas from the McCombs School of Business at The University of Texas at Austin. Learn more at [www.mcombs.utexas.edu](http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu)



Edit profile

### More from Medium

 Behz... in Thoug...   
**How do New Ideas Come About**

 La... in Mindful E...   
**4 Effective Ways Courageous People Can...**

 Daria... in Bette...   
**Starting a Podcast Improved My Brain Health**

 Daniel Bourke   
**Betting on yourself**



But new research from [Amit Kumar](#), assistant professor of marketing at Texas McCombs, shows that people feel more positively when they have conversations with strangers that are deeper than the default small talk. Study participants experienced more happiness, greater liking for and bonding with others, and increased enjoyment in the interactions after they were prompted to discuss more personal topics.

Unfortunately, we too often mistakenly let fear get the better of us. “People want to engage in deeper conversations than they typically do,” Kumar says. “It’s not that we’re disinterested in having these more meaningful discussions, but rather, we’re often inordinately worried about how these interactions will go.”

Below, we bypass any worries and get to know Kumar’s research — and the professor himself! — through a meaningful conversation.

How Strangers Become Friends (Long Version) | McCombs School of Bus...



For more information about this research, read the [University of Texas news story](#).

*“[Overly Shallow?: Miscalibrated Expectations Create a Barrier to Deeper Conversation](#)” is forthcoming, online in advance in Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.*

### Subscribe for the latest Big Ideas.

Sign up

I agree to leave medium.com and submit this information, which will be collected and used according to [Upscribe's privacy policy](#).

Some rights reserved 