



Wellbeing

Insights

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life



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The Friendship Advantage

Expanding your social circle as an adult

The research on human connection is vast but easily summarized: relationships matter. Perhaps more than anything else, our relationships have profound impact on our physical health, mental wellbeing and overall quality of life. However, as we transition to adulthood and move through various stages of life, our social circles become smaller and making new friends becomes

more difficult. And while we are technologically more connected than ever, and exchanging likes and pleasant comments on social media is nice, it's no substitute for true connection and meaningful interactions. Luckily, there are things we can do to help rekindle old friendships and even make some new ones.

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The Friendship Advantage Continued from page 1

Start with the past.

■ Consider your dormant friendships.

Chances are you've got at least one or two that are still in close enough proximity to spend time together face-to-face at least a few times per year. Send a text or social media message and get some quality time on the calendar.

■ Use your best friends as

connectors. It's likely that you've met a handful of people through them and that at least one of them would actually make a great friend for you as well. Ask your existing BFF for suggestions and set up some time to hang out.

Capitalize on commonalities.

■ Where are you already a regular?

One of the key tenants of adult friendship is shared interests. Look to those activities such as gym classes, professional groups, church, the dog park, etc. If there are faces you see often, particularly other people who may also be attending solo, put yourself out there and make an introduction.

■ Start your own social group to make or strengthen friendships and

to keep interactions consistent. Get creative and start with something interesting to you, for example, a weekly biking group, monthly wine social, book club, movie nights, recipe exchange circle, the list goes on.

Grow and nurture new connections.

■ **Take action.** Whether you're reigniting an old friendship or creating a new one, it will take a little bit of effort. If you have a great conversation with someone new, exchange numbers and contact them within a few days to schedule some time to hang out. If you're reconnecting with someone or trying to see them more regularly, schedule in advance. We have a tendency to wait until it's convenient at the spur of the moment; however, that will rarely work out. You may have to schedule months in advance and that's ok. Once it's on the calendar you can guard that commitment.

■ **Listen.** You may have heard the phrase "be more interested and less interesting." This is good advice for starting a new friendship. Ask questions and really listen to the response. Point out similarities where they exist, but be

mindful not to overpower the conversation by turning all of the attention back on yourself.

■ **Be vulnerable.** To make a true friend you've got to be able to talk about more than the weather. One major benefit of friendship is sharing in personal conversations and meaningful dialogue. In order to do that you have to understand each other on more than a surface level.

■ **Celebrate as much as you complain.** It's not that hard to find someone to complain with. And while sharing in the hard times is one hallmark of a great friend, it's a common misconception that this is vastly more important than sharing in successes and celebrations. Share in the other person's excitement to show you care about their happiness.

I define connection as the **energy that exists** between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive **sustenance and strength** from the relationship.

- BRENÉ BROWN

Mindful Minute

These summer months are great for getting outdoors, spending time with friends and family, and really enjoying all the fun that summer brings.

Sometimes we get distracted with what is going on in our lives and tend to get hung up on our thoughts, making us unable to fully enjoy what is happening in that moment. If you find yourself distracted by thoughts, try these **tips to help stay in the present moment.**

■ **Just breathe.** Take 3 to 4 deep, slow

breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Focus on your breathing and your mind will begin to push out those distracting thoughts.

■ **Take it in.** Be mindful of the environment – the sights, sounds and even the energy of the people who may be around.

■ **Re-evaluate.** After you've taken a minute to do some breathing and really hone in on what's around you, check in with yourself to see if you

feel more relaxed and less distracted.

■ **Be present.** Stay mindful of what is going on in the now and live in the current moment. Not only will you be less distracted by thoughts, but the present will be much more enjoyable if you are aware and engaged.

So if you're at a summer party, going for a walk or just trying to relax, be mindful of the present and keep your thoughts in the now.



On the Menu

Chickpeas

Many people who hear the word chickpea might immediately think of hummus, the widely popular chickpea-based dip that originated in the Middle East. However, visit any health food store these days and you'll find a large variety of foods using the ancient legume in creative ways. From pasta to cookies and pancakes, chickpeas (also known as garbanzo beans) have gained popularity for their versatility in cooking and baking, while also packing a nutrient-dense punch.

Chickpeas were first cultivated around 3000 B.C. in the Mediterranean area. They were extremely popular with the Egyptians and Greeks who were trade partners for centuries, which might explain why Arab and Greek cuisines are so similar. Nowadays, chickpeas can be found virtually everywhere. They are especially popular among the health conscious for their high-nutrient profile, which includes:

- High levels of fiber and protein, which work together to keep blood sugar levels stabilized and appetite under control.
- Rich amounts of plant-based protein, which is great if you are vegetarian or simply looking for the occasional alternative to meat. A 1-ounce serving has similar protein levels to other legumes like black beans and lentils; however, some studies have shown chickpeas to be a better source of plant-based protein compared to other legumes because they contain more essential amino acids.
- Magnesium and potassium content, which are both minerals known to provide protection against elevated blood pressure and heart disease.

Ways to Enjoy Chickpeas

If you're not a fan of eating chickpeas by themselves, the good news is there are many ways to sneak them into your diet. Here are five fun ways to enjoy chickpeas:

1. Roasted chickpeas make for a savory, crunchy snack or salad topper.
2. Chickpea pasta (found in most health food stores) is gluten-free, higher in protein and contains less carbohydrates than traditional wheat-based pasta.
3. Chickpea flour makes a tasty substitute for wheat flour in things like pancakes, crackers and fritters.
4. Mashed canned chickpeas make a great base for veggie burgers.
5. Try them in a traditional Middle Eastern falafel sandwich.

Keep It Fresh

Freshly cooked chickpeas will keep in an airtight container for up to 4 days in the refrigerator.

Crispy Crunchy Chickpeas

Ingredients:

- 1 12-ounce can of chickpeas (garbanzo), drained
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Salt
- Garlic powder (optional)
- Cayenne pepper (optional)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 450° F. Blot chickpeas with a paper towel to dry them. In a bowl, toss chickpeas with olive oil and season to taste with salt, garlic powder, cayenne pepper or any other spice of choice. Spread chickpeas on a baking sheet and roast for 30 to 40 minutes, until browned and crunchy.

Nutrition Info

1 Serving (¼ of recipe)

Calories	161
Carbohydrates	19.3g
Sugar	16.7g
Fiber	3.8g
Protein	4.2g
Sodium	337mg



Ask the Experts



Bridgette O'Connor,
Senior Wellbeing Consultant

Known on our team as
The Victor: Respected,
Competitive, Results-Oriented



LaTonia McGinnis,
Wellbeing Consultant

Known on our team as
The Archer: On-Target, Reasoned,
Pragmatic



Sue Trogu,
Wellbeing Consultant

Known on our team as
The Mediator: Steadfast, Composed,
Structured

Get to know the CBIZ Wellbeing Solutions team as we ask our experts about their own personal journey to living a vibrant life. This month we sat down with Bridgette O'Connor, LaTonia McGinnis and Sue Trogu. Check out what they had to say.

Q Research suggests we are happy and fulfilled when we are able to apply our strengths to our work to find purpose and meaning. How do you bring your unique strengths to work each day?

Bridgette: I find a lot of inherent meaning in my career, as my own journey to becoming and staying well (in mind, body and spirit) has been life-changing. Fueled by this passion, I look to pay forward the gift of wellbeing by helping support my teammates so they can be their best selves and assist my clients with creating workplaces where their team members can thrive personally and professionally.

LaTonia: As the Archer, I like to be able to use my listening skills to hear what our clients say (and what they don't say) to ensure we're working toward a clear and shared goal. One of my strengths is the ability to think through a client's challenges and develop high-caliber solutions.

Sue: I've always had very strong organizational skills. It's all in the preparation for me, as there's a certain comfortableness and confidence within the content of my days when I have it planned out. This allows me to be present during each task the day brings, locking in and focusing while still being adaptable to whatever fires may pop up.

Q What is your single most important self-care ritual?

Bridgette: I have learned to give myself permission to replenish in

order to be my best self at home and work. So I try to stay mindful of small things I can do to fill my cup, such as getting outside every day, making my favorite green smoothie, or challenging myself to put away my to-do list and go to bed earlier.

LaTonia: It may sound cliché coming from a wellbeing consultant, but it's true – physical activity. If I go longer than 3 days without breaking a sweat, I just don't feel like myself. I've learned that even a 15-minute walk can work wonders for a sour mood.

Sue: Being in the moment. Honestly, this is new for me. Doing one thing at a time, and doing it well, is certainly an acquired practice, but tuning my mind into what's going on in the present moment has been very rewarding.

Q Tracking and journaling wellbeing practices has been trending for several years. What methods do you utilize to keep tabs on your wellbeing?

Bridgette: I've lived by my calendar for my entire professional life and have realized the value of scheduling anything that matters to me, including self-care. To that end, I now schedule time for prayer and meditation, exercising (outdoors and with family whenever possible) and keeping up on mundane household tasks that, in effect, help simplify my life and keep me focused on what matters most to me.

LaTonia: I have tracked in one way or another for as long as I can remember. I have kept a journal since I was a

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Ask the Experts

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little girl and still do today. There is just something about putting pen to paper to clear your thoughts or gain clarity. Also, I use my smartwatch to keep track of my workouts, sleep and stress levels.

Sue: I'm old-school. I carry a small moleskin book with my calendar, tasks, gym tracking, water consumption, finances, to-do lists, wish lists, you name it. Whatever thought comes to mind gets entered in the book. It's a huge resource to me, and I get twitchy if I have more than three things in memory that I haven't yet written down.

Q Are there any new trends, products or practices in the wellbeing world that you are really interested in right now?



Bridgette: I like to tune in to wellbeing practices that help me stay strategic and balanced. I've been following trends focused on using early morning hours to focus on

gratitude, affirmations and goal setting. I'm currently working my way through [The Miracle Morning](#) by Hal Elrod. While it's challenging to get up early (especially with some sleepless nights with my toddler), I find it helps me focus and stay positive.

LaTonia: I know I'm late to the party, but I'm loving the kombucha trend right now and enjoy trying new brands and flavors; the more ginger, the better! On a separate note, I experience insomnia fairly often, so I've been doing more research for recommendations to help me achieve better rest. I've found listening to [sleep stories](#) helps me quiet my busy mind and fall asleep.

Sue: As of recent I've been into meditation. It started as listening to a visualization app at bedtime to help my son fall asleep but has spurred into quick meditations and breathing throughout the day. I use the [Headspace](#) app, Tracks to Relax Guided Sleep Meditation and a few other podcasts. The reminder to "just be" is a powerful one.

Q Changing habits is incredibly difficult. How have you successfully shifted habits in the past? Additionally, is there anything you are currently working to change and what strategies are you using to make it happen?

Bridgette: Changing habits for me comes easily as long as my "why" is powerful enough. In my journey to becoming and staying well, I had to make some significant changes to my diet and treat food as medicine. At first it was difficult to make changes, but as my health, energy and spirit improved it became my secret sauce to being my best self.



LaTonia: I'm in the process of creating a new goal related to practicing mindfulness. It hasn't been easy as my mind tends to always be preoccupied with something. However, mindfulness has made it easier to savor life's pleasures as they occur, helped me become fully engaged in activities and created a greater capacity to deal with stress. It's

a work in progress, but the Headspace app helps.

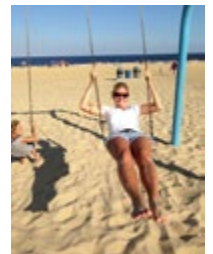
Sue: I grew up in a world of multitasking. Being able to do many things at once was a badge of honor, but in the long run it became a struggle of over-commitment and life became a series of to-do lists. While I still enjoy organizing and planning, I've learned to allow downtime, pencil in fun tasks and, most importantly, be present in the current moment. It's a constant battle in my mind to discipline myself to block out distractions, but it's a skill I'm happy to have developed.

Q What is your #1 piece of advice for optimal wellbeing?

Bridgette: Go easy on yourself! Many of us spend a lot of time focusing on our perceived faults, flaws and disadvantages. We are who we think we are; envision your best self and show up as that person.

LaTonia: Be kind to yourself and strive to achieve balance instead of perfection. One of my favorite quotes is "Perfection is boring, getting better is where the fun is."

Sue: I saw this advice on a sign recently, "wherever you are, be all there." This was profound for me and most certainly my #1 piece of advice for the time being. No pun intended.



Crafting a Successful Summer Routine

By now, most of us are either in the throes of the summer free-for-all or preparing for (or perhaps already experiencing) the start of the school year. While summertime offers a wonderful opportunity to let loose and have a less structured day, providing children with some semblance of order and routine can make the transition back to school a bit easier. Moreover, studies show that providing routine consistently throughout kids' formative years makes them feel secure and confident and helps build self-regulation skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

If you want to create more structure in your child's summer routine, establishing (and, generally, sticking to) a written schedule of daily activities can be helpful. Consider the age and unique needs, interests and abilities of your child when creating the plan. Provide timeframes for things like hygiene, meals and sleep, along with play, learning, social time and work. The sample schedule to the right can be used as a general guide to create your own.

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Sample Summer Weekday Schedule

8 a.m.	Self-care (wake up, eat breakfast, brush teeth, shower)
9 a.m.	Contribute (make bed, help with age-appropriate chores)
10 a.m.	Move (dance, walk, baseball, swim, tennis or other outdoor physical activity)
12 p.m.	Nourish (provide them with choices for a healthy lunch of protein, fat, veggies, fruit and a favorite whole grain)
1 p.m.	Replenish (downtime activities such as reading, puzzles, nap, lounging at pool or park)
3 p.m.	Learn (summer book club reading, hobbies, outdoor exploration)
5 p.m.	Technology (parent-approved Internet use, television, gaming)
6 p.m.	Connect (family time, dinner, games, neighborhood walks, ice cream)
8 p.m.	Rejuvenate (brush teeth, quiet time, read, lights out!)

A few points to note in creating a schedule:

■ **Enlist the help of your child.** Not only is creating a schedule an exercise in fostering principles of planning and self-regulation, toddlers, tweens and teens alike will respond favorably to the invitation to lend some creativity to and have some control over their day. Consider providing them with general labels and descriptions for each category to help spark their innovation and buy-in for the fun and the necessary tasks.

■ **Be (mostly) consistent.** While a written schedule is one that, over time, will become the blueprint that your kids will follow (even without reminders from you), to get to this point it's important that, as parents, we model the behavior we want to

see in our kids. Thus, it's important that the schedule is referenced and honored daily.

■ **Cut them some slack.** Remember that having a schedule does not necessitate that it is followed strictly. While having consistency brings security, leaving room for spontaneity, new ideas and interests, and overall growth helps prevent monotony. Look for opportunities to squeeze in some stargazing, a late night trip for ice cream, an evening swim, starting a new hobby or sport, making new friends and more.

Overall, a summer schedule can be useful in helping kids stay on track with balancing self-care, learning, fun and more. When thoughtfully created and amended to allow for flexibility, it can help them make the most of their summer, treating it as an opportunity for play, growth and relaxation. When abided by, a schedule can be life-changing for families, providing the stability we all need in order to thrive. Here's to making this summer the best yet!