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MailOnline

Forget work - Falling in love and breaking up are the most memorable moments in our lives

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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The best and worst moments in our lives occur within social relationships, a new study has revealed.

Falling in love and getting our hearts broken are more important landmarks in our lives than professional successes and personal accomplishments, according to the report by the University of Buffalo in New York.

The researchers found that interaction with other people and the fulfillment of an urge for social connection are our most memorable life moments, contrary to implications of previous research.



As Vince Vaughan and Jennifer Aniston show in their film *The Break Up*, falling in love and splitting from a partner are the most important moments in our lives

Professor Shira Gabriel, co-author of the study, said: 'Most of us spend much of our time and effort focused on individual achievements such as work, hobbies and schooling.'

'However this research suggests that the events that end up being most important in our lives, the events that bring us the most happiness and also carry the potential for the most pain, are social events - moments of connecting to others and feeling their connections to us.'

Professor Gabriel explained that much of the existing research in social psychology implies that events experienced independent of other individuals are central to our most intense emotional experiences. Her findings contradict this.

'We found that it was not independent events or individual achievements like winning awards or completing tasks that affected participants the most, but the moments when close relationships began or ended; when people fell in love or found a new friend; when a loved one died or broke their hearts.

'In short, it was the moments of connecting to others that that touched peoples' lives the most.'

The researchers interviewed 376 people across various different age groups for the study.

Participants were asked to describe the most positive and negative emotional experiences of their lives.

Regardless of sex or age, they were much more likely to describe social events as the most positive and negative thing they had ever experienced (compared with independent events).

The study also showed that the emotional impact of social events came a desire to belong and be accepted by others.

The study, *What Makes Us Feel the Best Also Makes Us Feel the Worst: The Emotional Impact of Independent and Interdependent Experiences*, appears in the forthcoming issue of *Self and Identity*.

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This focus on their personal life is particularly true for women - who are scatterbrained and not 100% devoted to their work. Most men, on the other hand, have to dedicate all their focus on building a career and supporting their family, therein sacrificing time and attention they would prefer to spend on other things. Ultimately, women have options, men have obligations.

- Anthony, (No longer in) Sheffield, 29/8/2010 10:07

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Dan, you misunderstand. I married when young and divorced before I met these men. All I mean is that I should have waited for someone who was more significant, which is easy to say with hindsight.

- Teresa, Horsham, UK, 28/8/2010 20:50

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I vividly remember the moments 10 years ago and 3 years ago, when I first met the two men who have meant the most to me in my life.

Neither of these were my ex-husband which is significant!

- Teresa, Horsham

Yeah, but not in a good way. No matter how many girl power high-fives the sisters give you. Family break-up and a contempt for marriage (or is it husbands?) - you go girrrl.

- Dan, London, 28/8/2010 12:02

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I vividly remember the moments 10 years ago and 3 years ago, when I first met the two men who have meant the most to me in my life.

Neither of these were my ex-husband which is significant!

- Teresa, Horsham, 27/8/2010 23:19

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SO TRUE!

We really didn't need another study to tell us this, but it does remind us of our priorities: always relationships, yet we tend to invest the least effort into making them work.

I'm sure most people have a wonderful or awful (or both) relational milestone that had a huge impact in their lives and they'll always remember.

- Lady, London, 27/8/2010 22:08

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Absolutely spot on,1992 was the best year of my life....i fell in love,then 8 years later we split up,without a doubt the worst period of my life,I'm still trying to get over it 10 years later.

- Larry Albert, London, 27/8/2010 19:53

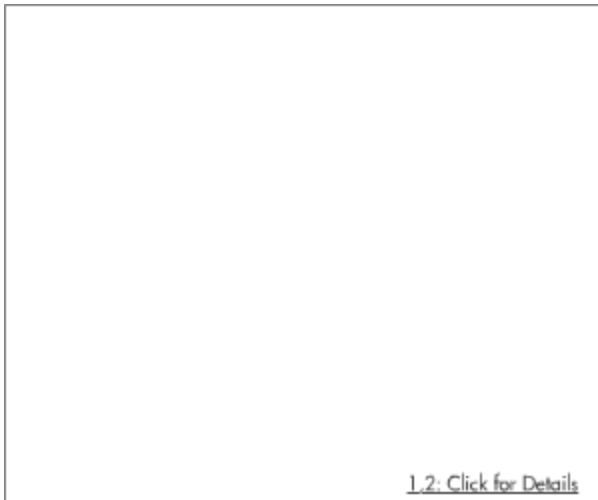
I read you, bro. You look back and think how could you be so foolish. All that wasted time. I'll never get it back.

- Kevin Gilmer, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne England, 27/8/2010 21:12

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