

Wonders of Health

A CNBC

APR 11 11:11 PM EDT



29-year-old travel nurse makes \$187,000 and works only 9 months a year

26-year-old pays \$0 to live in a 'luxury tiny home' she built in her backyard...

How much middle class...

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

An 85-year Harvard study on happiness found the No. 1 retirement challenge that 'no one talks about'

Published Fri, Mar 10 2023 • 10:09 AM EST



Marc Schulz, Contributor



Robert Waldinger, Contributor

@ROBERTWALDINGER

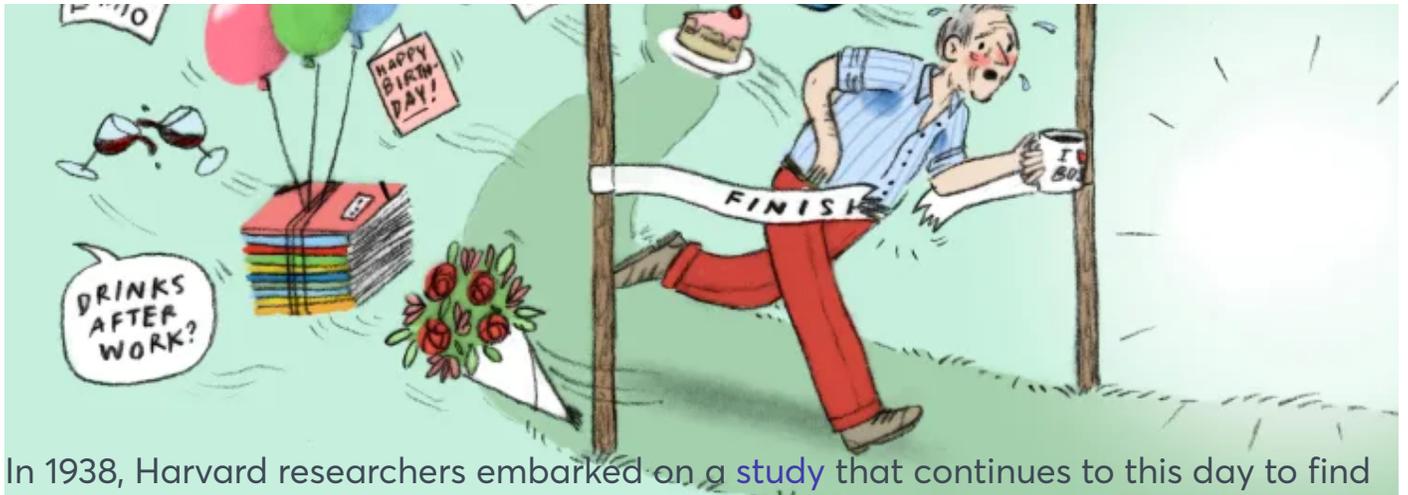
SHARE



WELLNESS

A CNBC

APR 11 11:11 PM ET

make it

In 1938, Harvard researchers embarked on a [study](#) that continues to this day to find out: What makes [us happy in life](#)?

The researchers gathered health records from 724 people from all over the world, asking detailed questions about their lives at two-year intervals.

As participants entered mid- and late-life, the Harvard Study often asked about [retirement](#). Based on their responses, the No. 1 challenge [people faced in retirement](#) was not being able to replace the social connections that had sustained them for so long at work.

Retirees don't miss working, they miss the people

When it comes to retirement, we often [stress about](#) things like [financial concerns](#), [health problems](#) and [caregiving](#).

But people who fare the best in retirement find ways to cultivate connections. And yet, almost no one talks about the importance of developing new sources of meaning and purpose.



school teacher, he found it hard to stay in touch with his colleagues.

"I get spiritual sustenance from talking shop. It's wonderful to help someone acquire skills," he said. "Teaching young people was what started my whole process of exploring."

Taking on hobbies might not be enough

For many of us, work is where we feel that we matter most — to our workmates, customers, communities, and even to our families — because we are providing for them.

Henry Keane was abruptly forced into retirement by changes at his factory. Suddenly he had an abundance of time and energy.

He started volunteering at the [American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars](#). He put time into his hobbies — refinishing furniture and cross-country skiing. But something was still missing.

"I need to work!" Keane told the researchers at age 65. "Nothing too substantial, but I'm learning that I just love being around people."

To retire happy, invest in your relationships now

Keane's realization teaches us an important lesson not only about retirement, but about work itself: We are often shrouded in financial concerns and the pressure of deadlines, so we don't notice how significant our work relationships are until they're gone.

Work and Health

A CNBC

APR 11 11:11 PM EDT



Marloes De Vries for CNBC Make It

To create more meaningful connections, ask yourself:

- Who are the people I most enjoy working with, and what makes them valuable to me? Am I appreciating them?
- What kinds of connections am I missing that I want more of? How can I make them happen?
- Is there someone I'd like to know better? How can I reach out to them?



meaning and purpose. It could be that this influence is, on balance, a good one. But if not, are there any small changes you can make?

"When I look back," Ellen Freund, a former university administrator, told the study in 2006, "I wish I paid more attention to the people and less to the problems. I loved my job. But I think I was a difficult and impatient boss. I guess, now that you mention it, I wish I got to know everyone a little better."

Every workday is an important part of our personal experience, and the more we enrich it with relationships, the more we benefit. Work, too, is life.

Robert Waldinger, MD, is a professor of psychiatry at *Harvard Medical School*, director of the *Harvard Study of Adult Development*, and director of *Psychodynamic Therapy at Massachusetts General Hospital*. He is a practicing psychiatrist and also a Zen master and author of *"The Good Life."* Follow Robert on Twitter [@robertwaldinger](#).

Marc Shulz, PhD, is the associate director of the *Harvard Study of Adult Development*, and a practicing therapist with postdoctoral training in health and clinical psychology at *Harvard Medical School*. He is also the author of *"The Good Life."*

Don't miss:

- ***An 85-year Harvard study found the No. 1 thing that makes us happy in life: It helps us 'live longer'***
- ***A 67-year-old who 'un-retired' shares the biggest retirement challenge 'that no one talks about'***

Wired for Wealth

A CNBC

APR 11 11:11 PM EDT



▶ 8:13

Inside a retiree's \$420/month apartment by the beach in Mexico

Want to be smarter and more successful with your money, work & life? Sign up for our new newsletter here!

Ad removed. [Details](#)

Women's Health

A CNBC

APR 11 11:11 PM EDT



2

A longevity expert shares the 2 exercises she does every week to 'slow down aging' and reduce stress

3

This creative skill for freelancers is in 'giant' demand—and can pay as much as \$145 per hour

4

An 85-year Harvard study on happiness found the No. 1 retirement challenge that 'no one talks about'

5

100-year-old sisters share 5 simple tips for leading a long, happy life

Sponsored Links by Taboola

FROM THE WEB

Top Podiatrist: If You Have Toenail Fungus Try This Tonight (It's Genius!)

WellnessGuide101.com

Watch Now

If You Have Toenail Fungus Try This Tonight (It's Genius!)

Healthy Guru

Work and Health

A CNBC

ADPTT 11 | 1 PM ET



Stay in the loop

Get Make It newsletters delivered to your inbox

SIGN UP

About Us

Learn more about the world of CNBC Make It

LEARN MORE

Follow Us



[CNBC.COM](#) ↗ [Join the CNBC Panel](#) ↗

© 2023 CNBC LLC. All Rights Reserved. A Division of NBC Universal

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)
[CA Notice](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Contact](#)