

Match the words to the text

amazing, analysis, assume, benefits, experiment, findings, goals, laboratory, negative, participant, professional, research, results, similarities, study, topics

We love to reminisce and tell others about our extraordinary experiences--that time we climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, got to taste that rare food or ran into a celebrity on the street--but research suggests this may not be such a wise idea. In fact, the (1)_____ published in the latest edition of psychology journal, suggest that sharing these extraordinary experiences are not as beneficial as we might think and can actually come at a social cost.

"Extraordinary experiences are pleasurable in the moment but can leave us socially worse off in the long run," says psychological scientist and study author Gus Cooney of Harvard University. "The participants in our (2)_____ mistakenly thought that having an extraordinary experience would make them the star of the conversation. But they were wrong because to be extraordinary is to be different than other people, and social interaction is grounded in (3)_____."

Cooney, who conducted the research with co-authors Daniel T. Gilbert of Harvard University and Timothy D. Wilson of the University of Virginia, was interested in exploring the (4)_____ consequences of extraordinary experiences based on his own observations with others. He had noticed that we are keen to tell our friends about new or rare experiences, but most successful conversations are about ordinary topics. He therefore wondered "if there might be times when extraordinary experiences have more costs than (5)_____, and whether people know what those times are."

To find out if he was right, Cooney, Gilbert and Wilson invited sixty-eight participants to their (6)_____ in groups of four. In each group, one (7)_____ was asked to watch a highly rated video of a street magician performing for a crowd, while the other three participants were asked to watch a lower-rated animated video. Participants were told about each video's rating. After watching the videos, the participants sat around a table and had a five-minute unstructured conversation about them.

The findings were not what participants expected. It seems we should be more careful when choosing and sharing our experiences, because the participants who watched the higher-rated video, the "extraordinary experiencers", reported feeling worse after the group discussion than those who watched the lower-rated video. Even though, before the (8)_____, all participants thought that the "extraordinary experiencer" would talk more during the post-video discussion, that person actually spoke less and felt excluded from the conversation as a result.

There are two main reasons why you might not agree with Cooney, Gilbert and Wilson's research conclusions, and these do not include the fact that sixty eight people

is not a very high number to include in a study. Firstly, the video of a street magician is the same as an incredible life experience. The research uses cost-benefit (9)_____, i.e. the benefit of watching the video minus the cost of not being included socially. But it is unlikely that a street performer, even an (10)_____ one, produces (11)_____ similar to the feeling of an extraordinary experience. So, when the cost of not being included is taken away from the benefit of watching the video, of course the result will be more negative.

Secondly, one wonders why the researchers (12)_____ that people who do extraordinary things only spend time with boring people who have no bucket list themselves? In reality, if you explore the Costa Rican rainforest, maybe your friend goes sailing, gets an amazing (13)_____ qualification, or watches his child graduate from college. All of these can be considered great topics of conversation. Of course people will always have lots of everyday experiences to talk about too. After all, when you return from an inspiring trip, you still have to do the laundry and call your parents.

Another possible conclusion could be that if you want to do fantastic things and not be lonely, you should choose friends who have similar ambitions. You can also be careful about the conversation (14)_____ you choose.

So before you throw your bucket list out the window, it is worth considering how useful this research is to your life goals and social situation. It certainly cannot hurt to reflect on the warning of the (15)_____. If doing great things makes you feel distant from your friends then, yes, you should probably think about how meaningful your goals are. However, if old friends cannot keep up with you or relate to your life (16)_____, then you need to decide how much that should stop you from following your dreams.

answers:

We love to reminisce and tell others about our extraordinary experiences--that time we climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, got to taste that rare food or ran into a celebrity on the street--but research suggests this may not be such a wise idea. In fact, the (1)findings published in the latest edition of psychology journal, suggest that sharing these extraordinary experiences are not as beneficial as we might think and can actually come at a social cost.

"Extraordinary experiences are pleasurable in the moment but can leave us socially worse off in the long run," says psychological scientist and study author Gus Cooney of Harvard University. "The participants in our (2)study mistakenly thought that having an extraordinary experience would make them the star of the conversation. But they were wrong because to be extraordinary is to be different than other people, and social interaction is grounded in (3)similarities."

Cooney, who conducted the research with co-authors Daniel T. Gilbert of Harvard University and Timothy D. Wilson of the University of Virginia, was interested in exploring the (4)negative consequences of extraordinary experiences based on his own observations with others. He had noticed that we are keen to tell our friends about new or rare experiences, but most successful conversations are about ordinary topics. He therefore wondered "if there might be times when extraordinary experiences have more costs than (5)benefits, and whether people know what those times are."

To find out if he was right, Cooney, Gilbert and Wilson invited sixty-eight participants to their (6)laboratory in groups of four. In each group, one (7)participant was asked to watch a highly rated video of a street magician performing for a crowd, while the other three participants were asked to watch a lower-rated animated video. Participants were told about each video's rating. After watching the videos, the participants sat around a table and had a five-minute unstructured conversation about them.

The findings were not what participants expected. It seems we should be more careful when choosing and sharing our experiences, because the participants who watched the higher-rated video, the "extraordinary experiencers", reported feeling worse after the group discussion than those who watched the lower-rated video. Even though, before the (8)experiment, all participants thought that the "extraordinary experienter" would talk more during the post-video discussion, that person actually spoke less and felt excluded from the conversation as a result.

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Secondly, one wonders why the researchers (12)assume that people who do extraordinary things only spend time with boring people who have no bucket list themselves? In reality, if you explore the Costa Rican rainforest, maybe your friend goes sailing, gets an amazing (13)professional qualification, or watches his child graduate from college. All of these can be considered great topics of conversation. Of course people will always have lots of everyday experiences to talk about too. After all, when you return from an inspiring trip, you still have to do the laundry and call your parents.

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