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Happiness Is... At Least 10 True Friends *The National Lottery reveals the secrets to a happier life*

People's happiness depends on the number of close friends they have – according to new research by the University of Nottingham for The National Lottery, those lucky enough to have at least 10 good friends are likely to be happier than those with less than five.

Dr Richard Tunney from the University's School of Psychology, looked at the relationship between social networks and happiness among lottery winners and a sample group from across the UK. He found that to be happy we should look after our friends – happier people tend to have more close buddies and make new ones regularly. Lottery winners follow a similar pattern but were happiest with friends they had known a long time – resulting in a smaller but closer circle of friends.

Over 1,760 people were asked a number of questions about their relationships with friends – including when they met, how often they talk and what they do together – as well as how happy and satisfied they felt with life.

The report found that people with five friends or less have a 40% chance of being happy. Having between 5 and ten friends gives you a 50% chance of happiness, and people with more than 10 friends are increasingly likely to be happy than not (55%). But, having considerably more friends than 10 doesn't make you a happier person – it is more important to maintain the relationship with the ones you have.

Dr Tunney said: "Having a number of old, close friendships is related to individual happiness. People who were 'extremely satisfied' with their lives had twice the number of friends of people who were 'extremely dissatisfied'."

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As well as looking at a UK sample group, Dr Tunney compared the results to those of lottery winners and found that winners make fewer new friends than the comparison group but they are a happier group of people. Dr Tunney believes this could be because the win allows them to spend more quality time with their families rather than socialising with new friends*.

The survey also revealed the friendship-to-happiness ratio in the UK's major cities and found that although people in some cities had lots of friends, they were less close to them than in others and therefore not as happy.

People from Birmingham were crowned as the friendliest and happiest bunch. With an average of 29 friends each, 75% of Brummies claim they are officially happy. At the bottom of the list are people from Brighton who despite having an average of 42 friends each, only 56% of them were found to be happy.

Dr Tunney concluded: "In these uncertain economic times, it is important to remember just how greatly friends can contribute to your general well being and happiness. Those who have genuine, true friends for life are rich in many more ways."

Dr Richard Tunney is the author of The Circle of Friends report which is the third study into happiness, looking at a comparison between lottery winners and a UK sample group, commissioned by The National Lottery.

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**See results of Dr Richard Tunney's Happiness Reports from 2006 and 2007*

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- For further information on Camelot, The National Lottery and its games, please visit the following websites: www.camelotgroup.co.uk and www.national-lottery.co.uk
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