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How Stories Will Take People From Lonely To Happy And Healthy



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I write about personal and professional health and well-being.



Humans are wired for connection yet we are less focused on its importance in our modern world. PHOTO BY HUB DOT

As the world becomes increasingly digital, our daily necessities are becoming more and more automated. And as a result, the fine art of ‘in real life’ connection is getting less attention.

Yet this is at odds with the basis of our species. Humans are predominantly social beings, wired for connection, and our experience of life stems from this.

As world renown social researcher, [Brene Brown](#), says the depth and quality of that *connection* are built around *story*.

The effectiveness of your team, your leadership style, or even your family dynamics (regardless of the amount of technology behind them) comes down to your level of connection and ability to engage in effective story-telling.



Hub Dot was started around Simona Barbieri's kitchen table and now events take place globally. PHOTO BY HUB DOT

Over the past six years Simona Barbieri, Founder and Creative Director of [Hub Dot](#), has been creating opportunities for people to interact purely on this basis. She's banned the all too familiar yet cringe-worthy question of *"What do you do?"* from her networking events since day one.

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Hub Dot events started with 98 people literally gathered around Simona's kitchen table. To date, 21,000 people have experienced the events globally. Their reach continues to expand.

From countryside villages to the beaches of Antigua and board room tables at big banks, the formula is helping people to value the stories of the people around them and in doing so to increase feelings of belonging, engagement and even happiness.



The Hub Dot formula for connection translates globally from countryside villages to board room tables. PHOTO BY HUB DOT

The passion and dedication of both the team and their community are clearly evident. At their sixth birthday party in London earlier this month, the majority of story-tellers referenced Hub Dot as part of their own personal ‘connection’ journey.

Attendees shared how previous events have enabled them to start new businesses, seek funding, build friendships, and even come through dark periods in their lives. And, so much more. Not your average networking event.

Hub Dot’s belief in a better way of connecting people is needed more than ever. **Up to a fifth** of all U.K. adults report that they feel lonely most or all of the time. In addition to the emotional impact of loneliness, there are significant health implications of these trends too. **Loneliness** has been shown to be as bad for health as smoking and obesity.



Attendees share stories about the power of connection in their own lives. PHOTO BY HUB DOT

In response to “one of the greatest public health challenges of our time”, the U.K. Government launched its first ever cross-Government [Loneliness Strategy](#) in October 2018. The Strategy focuses on ‘social prescribing’ (allowing GPs to direct people to tailored support), funding to increase the number of community spaces available, and funding for charity and community groups to expand programmes that aim to bring people together.

A [Harvard Study](#) in 2017 showed social connections are really good for us and key for greater happiness, health, and well-being. Further bringing to light the necessity of ‘in real life’ connection.

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Hub Dot's way of bringing people together sparks great “alchemy” (as Simona calls it) to strengthen this connection—even with those you are meeting for the very first time.

Speaking with Simona this week, she shared that the company was born out of frustration. Leaving a ‘city’ job and feeling like she was in transition, she found networking events and attempts to make connections left her feeling like she wasn't enough and didn't fit in.

She wanted to feel inspired and transformed and instead felt out of place with her ‘label’.

“ I just kept thinking, I just wish I could tell you my story. *Simona Barbieri, Hub Dot Founder*



Hub Dot's formula strips people of labels and judgment and goes straight to their story. PHOTO BY HUB DOT

Inviting a wide berth of people to her first meeting, she simply told them it would be “coffee with a difference”. On arrival, she asked everyone to pick a colored dot, representing their current mindset or intention for the meeting.

She wanted people to be able to relax, with no labels, and to connect with someone they would otherwise have never met. To strip judgment and barriers.

This foundation continues to lead the way the entire company runs.

Taking this same principle into the way you do business, how you show up as an employee, or how you interact in your personal life, has the potential for profound effects. When you care about your people, your results change.

Next time you meet someone for the very first time, why not ask them about their story. As Hub Dot shows, there are endless possibilities to the alchemy that will unfold from there.

Danielle Brooker, life coach, wellness lover and founder of [The Daisy Patch](#). She writes about personal growth, health and wellbeing. Follow her on Instagram [@thedaisypatchcoaching](#).



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