

Daily Negotiation and Its Effects on Short and Longer-term Well-being

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Abstract

The present study examines three widely-held assumptions about negotiation that have actually never been tested outside the confines of a laboratory : (1) it's a daily activity, (2) it's generally unpleasant, and yet (3) it leads to happier lives. Leveraging an app-based experience-sampling methodology, we found that 25% of daily interactions involve negotiation, often resulting in a short-term dip in happiness. However, frequent negotiators reported higher overall happiness, underscoring the long-term benefits of this skill. The most common negotiation activities involved 'reaching an agreement' and 'making a joint decision', while formal 'bargaining' was less frequently used. We found negotiation to be more prevalent in professional interactions than in personal relationships. Importantly, our data revealed no significant gender or age differences in negotiation frequency, challenging traditional stereotypes.

Daily Negotiation and Its Effects on Short and Longer-term Well-being

Hundreds of papers in management, psychology, law, economics, political science, and many other fields begin by asserting that negotiation is an integral, often dreaded, yet crucial aspect of human interactions. But while most journal articles and textbooks highlight the ubiquity and importance of negotiation in our lives, its prevalence, emotional impact, and consequences for overall well-being in everyday life remain largely unknown. How often do people try to shape agreements, convince others to think or act a certain way, navigate conflict, or bargain every day? How do people feel when they negotiate? And does it matter for their overall happiness? The present study examines three widely-held assumptions about negotiation that have actually never been tested outside the confines of a laboratory : (1) it's a daily activity, (2) it's generally unpleasant, and yet (3) it leads to happier lives. We use an app-based experience-sampling methodology, where participants log and rate their negotiations and emotions as they occur in real-time to provide the first comprehensive examination of negotiation in everyday life and its implications for both short and longer-term well-being.

“We negotiate every day”

Negotiations, defined as social interactions aimed at reaching an agreement that improves the status quo (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992), exhibit distinct characteristics that set them apart from other forms of interactions. These unique features encompass their goal-driven nature (Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001), the existence of diverging interests (Pruitt, 1998), and the requirement for strategic communication to achieve desired outcomes (e.g., Bowles & Babcock, 2013; Lee & Ames, 2017; Schaerer, Schweinsberg, Thornley, & Swaab, 2020; Trotschel et al., 2015). Just as conversations may serve a variety of objectives– such as creating mutual understanding, cultivating a positive impression, or merely providing entertainment (Yeomans, Schweitzer,

Brooks, 2022)—negotiations too can exhibit a spectrum of objectives that span from persuasion to navigating conflict. Existing scholarship, however, lacks a comprehensive taxonomy of the different types of interactions that fall under the negotiation umbrella. Here, we propose a framework of eight non-mutually exclusive dimensions that encapsulate a wide spectrum of interpersonal interactions where negotiation plays a pivotal role (see Table 1).

Negotiation Dimensions	Definition	Example Studies
1. Reach an agreement	Finding common ground and establishing mutually beneficial terms among parties.	Fisher, Ury & Patton (2006), Raiffa (1982)
2. Resolve an issue in a way that's acceptable for all	Addressing the needs and concerns of all parties, achieving a satisfactory resolution.	Pruitt & Carnevale (1993), Walton & McKersie (1965)
3. Convince someone to do something	Persuading and influencing others to take a specific course of action.	Cialdini (2001), Petty & Cacioppo (1986)
4. Convince someone to see things differently	Presenting one's perspective and reasoning compellingly to shift others' views.	Hovland et al. (1953), Chaiken (1980)
5. Navigate a conflict	Addressing conflicts and working towards a resolution that promotes harmony.	Deutsch (1973), Thomas (1992)
6. Make a joint decision that considers others' preferences	Integrating differing preferences to reach a consensus acceptable to everyone.	Bazerman et al. (2000), Lax & Sebenius (1986)
7. Bargain over something	Exchanging offers and counteroffers to arrive at an agreement that optimizes benefits.	Nash (1950), Rubinstein (1982)

8. Act as a mediator	Facilitating communication and understanding between disputing parties as a neutral third party.	Moore (2003), Bercovitch & Jackson (2009)
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Research on the prevalence of negotiation behavior has primarily focused on the factors influencing individuals' propensity to *initiate* negotiations in laboratory or hypothetical vignette studies. For instance, researchers have examined the impact of emotions (Kapoutsis et al., 2014; Kong et al., 2011), social incentives (Bowles et al., 2007), power dynamics and legitimacy (Lammers et al., 2008; Magee et al., 2007), and skills (Volkema et al., 2013) on negotiation tendencies. Individual differences such as personality traits (Volkema & Fleck, 2012), risk aversion (Marks & Harold, 2011), attitudes toward bargaining (Lee, 2000), and cultural differences (Lee, 2000; Volkema & Fleck, 2012) have also been linked to people's self-reported propensity to negotiate.

Very few studies provide insights into the prevalence of negotiation in real-life, and existing research focuses on highly specific situations, such as job offers and home, car, or souvenir purchases. For instance, two studies have examined the propensity of recent college graduates to negotiate their job offers and found that negotiation was relatively frequent (20% to 25% of participants negotiated) with situational factors such as the attractiveness of initial offers, the number of available alternatives, and prior work experience affecting negotiation initiation (Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; O'Shea & Bush, 2002). Likewise, analyses of residential property transactions in England show that negotiation is common: two-thirds of potential buyers who have their first offer turned down continue negotiating with the seller (Merlo & Ortalo-Magne, 2004). XX% percent of people also attempt to negotiate better prices for their cars (ref). Finally,

price negotiation is also extremely frequent among tourists, especially in destinations with loose market regulations (Kozak 2015; Zhang et al., 2017).

While these studies suggest that negotiation behavior—especially bargaining—is commonplace in clearly-defined contexts, the extent to which people negotiate every day and which negotiation dimensions are more prevalent remains unknown. Besides, there is an important distinction between initiating negotiations and being involved in them. You may find yourself routinely – and reluctantly – caught up in negotiations with friends or colleagues, even though you never intended to engage in such challenging conversations. By exploring the frequency and dimensions of negotiation that individuals experience daily, we can uncover a more realistic perspective on the negotiation landscape.

“Most people dislike negotiating”

Negotiation is commonly portrayed as a dreaded, unpleasant emotional experience for most people. And there is indeed a lot of indirect evidence to suggest that engaging in negotiation can have a negative impact on our short-term well-being. Negotiation, by its nature, sometimes involves actual conflict and confrontation, which can elicit discomfort, anger, and anxiety in the short term (see Lindner, 2006 for review). It also often involves perceived conflict. People often view negotiations as zero-sum, seeing one party’s gains as offset by other parties’ losses (Bazerman & Neale, 1983; Johnson, Zhang, & Keil, 2021; Różycka-Tran, Boski, & Wojciszke, 2015) and the more they hold these zero-sum beliefs, the more they worried that negotiations lead to harmful interactions and the more they avoid them (Davidai, White, & Gregorich, 2022). These negative emotions can make the act of negotiating momentarily unpleasant for individuals. In fact, anticipating reduced levels of happiness during the negotiation process leads people to avoid negotiating (Kong, Tuncel, & Parks, 2011), and

feelings of nervousness increase the likelihood that people will exit a negotiation soon after it starts (Wood & Schweitzer, 2011).

Many people also dread the prospect of asking. Individuals often worry about imposing on others, appearing overly aggressive, revealing their own shortcomings, and the possibility of rejection (DePaulo & Fisher, 1980; Milgram & Sabini, 1978). This fear is exacerbated by common misperceptions: individuals tend to underestimate the positive regard their negotiation counterparts may have for them (Ames & Wazlawek, 2014) and overestimate the inconvenience they impose on others when making requests (Zhao & Epley, 2022).

Despite the wealth of indirect evidence suggesting a general dislike of negotiation, there is a striking lack of direct empirical evidence examining this notion within the context of everyday life. Much of the existing research has been conducted in controlled laboratory settings, where participants were asked to negotiate or make requests of strangers. Therefore, whether the statement "most people dislike negotiating" holds true beyond the confines of a laboratory remains an open question.

“Negotiating leads to happier lives”

While the act of negotiation may carry short-term affective costs, there are compelling reasons to believe that individuals who negotiate more often may reap long-term benefits that contribute to happier lives.

One of the key reasons lies in the positive impact of negotiation on social relationships (Delatorre & Wagner, 2019; Kurdek, 1995). The quantity and quality of social relationships is probably the most important contributor to happiness under people’s control (Quoidbach et al, 2019). As individuals negotiate more frequently, they may become more adept at handling conflict, understanding others' perspectives, and finding a mutually satisfactory resolution (see

Movius, 2008). These skills, honed through repeated practice, are invaluable in fostering healthier and more satisfying relationships. Providing indirect evidence for the idea that negotiation leads to a happier life, studies indicate that passive responses to interpersonal conflicts, such as avoidance, can lead to increased stress and strain, and even exacerbate depressive symptoms (Dijkstra, De Dreu, Evers, & Van Dierendonck, 2009; Pettit & Joiner, 2006; Marchand, 2000). Frequent negotiators, with their proactive approach to conflict resolution, are potentially less prone to these negative emotional outcomes and may enjoy more satisfying social interactions and higher well-being,

Another important factor could be the role of negotiation in enhancing self-esteem and efficacy. Each successful negotiation serves as a testament to an individual's capability to advocate for themselves and navigate through intricate situations. This self-efficacy is not merely a transient feeling; research indicates it can have lasting impacts. For instance, a study by Curhan, Elfenbein, and Kilduff (2009) found that individuals' self-perceptions during job offer negotiations significantly predicted their job satisfaction, compensation satisfaction, and turnover intentions one year after the negotiations had concluded. In essence, the confidence derived from successful negotiations can contribute to increased self-esteem, which in turn can boost people's happiness and buffer against depression (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Cheng & Furnham, 2003). Conversely, in the long run, habitual avoidance of negotiation could contribute to feelings of helplessness, stagnation, and even depression, as individuals fail to address conflicts and fulfill their needs (e.g., Alloy et al., 1988; Abramson et al., 1989; Hayes et al., 1996; Kashdan et al., 2006).

Lastly, frequent negotiation can be instrumental in improving life outcomes. Frequent negotiators are more likely to advocate for better salaries, secure promotions, and steer their

career paths in alignment with their personal aspirations. Such control over one's life circumstances, along with the tangible benefits that negotiation can yield (Babcock & Lasch-ever, 2003), can contribute to a sense of fulfillment and happiness.

The connections between negotiation, better social relationships, self-esteem, and improved life outcomes make a persuasive argument for the idea that individuals who negotiate more frequently may lead happier lives. However, the empirical validation of this hypothesis has yet to be undertaken.

Demographic Differences

Beyond testing negotiation adages with solid data, it's important to assess their universal applicability. Evaluating how frequently different demographic groups negotiate and the emotional impacts of these negotiations could inform the creation of negotiation training programs tailored to specific needs and challenges.

One of the most widely examined and debated individual differences in negotiation research is gender (Babcock et al., 2006; Small et al., 2007), giving rise to the notion that "women don't ask." Some studies find evidence that men initiate salary (Kugler et al., 2014), promotion (Crothers et al, 2010), or car price negotiations (Chandra, Gulati, & Sallee, 2017) more than women, particularly when the opportunity isn't explicitly presented (Leibbrandt & List, 2015). However, other studies contest these findings (Säve-Söderbergh, 2019).

The role of age in negotiation, especially concerning interpersonal conflict, has also been examined. Older adults tend to use passive strategies, like waiting for issues to resolve themselves, in response to interpersonal conflicts (Davis et al., 2009). Conversely, younger individuals are more likely to vocalize their dissatisfaction. This age difference is also seen in car

buying negotiations, where older customers often pay more than younger ones for the same car (Chandra et al., 2017).

However, these studies are often context-specific or conducted in lab environments. The extent to which these gender and age differences occur in broader, real-world negotiation scenarios remains largely uninvestigated.

The Present Study

This study seeks to enrich our understanding of negotiation in everyday life. We leverage an experience-sampling design to overcome traditional constraints, such as social desirability and recall biases, which have plagued previous research on negotiation (Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001; Kwon & Weingart, 2004), and examine the complex interplay between negotiation frequency and well-being.

Methods

Participants

A total of 350 participants were recruited via the Prolific online platform (see the advertisement in Supplementary Note 1). Inclusion criteria required participants to be at least 18 years old, from the U.K. or U.S., and possess a smartphone compatible with the MindSampler app (iPhone or Android). Participants provided informed consent and received a 1£ compensation for installing MindSampler and completing an initial sign-up survey on the app (demographics and well-being). Participants were then paid 0.15£ per experience-sampling survey completed over the next seven days (paid as a single bonus at the end of the study). Additionally, a bonus of £10 was awarded to the three participants with the most surveys completed, with a random draw in case of a tie. The final sample comprised 302 participants who completed at least one experience-sampling survey (105 females, 194 males, 3 other/prefer not to

say, with a mean age of 25.1 years ($SD = 11.4$). On average, participants completed 17.5 (S.D. = 15.1) experience-sampling surveys ($N_{surveys} = 5286$)

Procedure

Upon recruitment, participants were instructed to download the MindSampler app onto their smartphones (www.mindsampler.com) and to enter the study code. The app then sent push notifications to participants at random times throughout the day, prompting them to complete a brief questionnaire designed in Qualtrics and displayed seamlessly within the app. Participants were required to complete these questionnaires within 15 minutes of receiving the notification to ensure the accuracy and relevance of their responses (Kuppens, 2021). Questionnaires completed after 15 minutes of receiving notifications did not count toward participants' compensation. Participants could set their preferred number of daily notifications (from 1 to 12) and time window in the app's settings. The default was 3 notifications a day, all seven days of the week from 8 AM to 10 PM.

Measures

Current Happiness. Participants began each survey by rating their current affect on a two-dimensional 5-point graphic slider measuring valence and arousal (see Figure 1a). As pre-registered, the present study focuses on happiness (i.e., the valence dimension). We report exploratory analyses of the arousal item in Supplementary Materials Note 3. Spoiler alert: We found no significant relationship between negotiation behavior and this dimension of affect.

Current Activity. Next, participants were asked to pick what best described their main activity before answering the survey using three mutually exclusive categories: work, maintenance, and leisure (see Figure 1b). Various classification systems for human activity have been developed by research bodies and governments worldwide, reflecting regional and cultural

specificities (e.g., American Time Use Survey; Harmonised European Time Use Surveys). We chose to focus on these three fundamental categories because they are easy to understand for participants, consistently emerge across systems, and align with classical economic and sociological theories of time allocation (Becker, 1965; Bianchi et al., 2000; Aguiar & Hurst, 2007). Work refers to professional or income-generating activities. Maintenance refers to tasks necessary for the sustenance of daily life and households, including self-care and childcare. Leisure refers to discretionary activities performed for enjoyment, relaxation, or personal enrichment. These different elements were illustrated with pictograms.

Recent Social Interactions. Participants were then asked to report the time elapsed since their last interaction with someone using one of six response options: “now,” “less than 15 min ago,” “less than 30 min ago,” “less than 1 hour ago,” “less than 2 hours ago,” “over 2 hours ago.” If participants reported an interaction within the last two hours, they were further asked to rate how close they felt to the person or people involved on a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (not close at all) to 4 (very close) and to select the main social category they belonged to from nine non-mutually exclusive options: parent, partner, kid, coworker, stranger, acquaintance, friend, relative, and other (see Figure 1c).

Our choice to ask participants about the time elapsed since their last interaction instead of whether they are currently engaged in one, as often done in experience-sampling studies (e.g., Quoidbach et al., 2019), was primarily driven by concerns that participants might not respond to notifications while in the midst of intense negotiations. By asking about the time since the last interaction, we aim to mitigate potential response bias and provide a more accurate representation of the frequency and pattern of negotiations in everyday life. Furthermore, by using a two-hour window maximum window, we aim to strike a balance between capturing more

interactions and ensuring the accuracy of the reported information. A two-hour window minimizes recall bias, as research on memory and recall (e.g., Ebbinghaus's forgetting curve) indicates that memory decay occurs rapidly within the first few hours after an event.

Negotiation dimensions. Last, participants were asked to evaluate whether their last interaction (if it happened less than two hours ago) involved any of the following eight negotiation dimensions: (1) reach an agreement, (2) resolve an issue in a way that's acceptable for all, (3) convince someone to do something, (4) convince someone to see things my way, (5) navigate a conflict, (6) make a joint decision that considers others' preferences, (7) bargain over something, and (8) act as a mediator. Participants could select multiple dimensions if applicable (see Figure 1d).

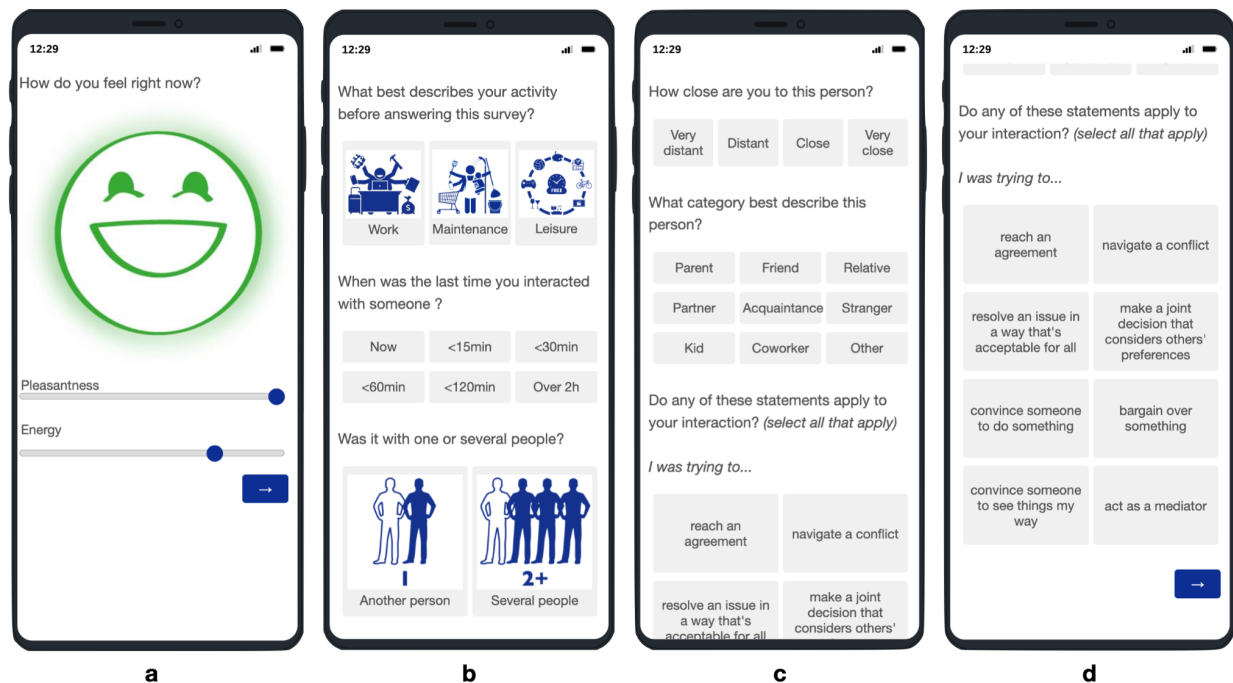


Figure 1. Visuals of the experience-sampling items

Pre-registered analyses and exclusion rules

All our data, code, and pre-registration can be found at [https://researchbox.org/ \(#1428\)](https://researchbox.org/#1428). We note one deviation from our pre-registration: We originally aimed to recruit 200 participants on Prolific and 50 MBA students. However, we did not manage to recruit MBA students as planned. Therefore, we recruited additional participants on Prolific (total $N = 302$) and did not explore the differences between the two populations as mentioned in the secondary analyses section of our pre-registration.

Frequency of negotiation in everyday life. To estimate the population-level frequency of negotiation in everyday life, we examined all the reported social interactions ($N = 4384$) and fitted multilevel logistic regression models using the *lme4* package for R (Bates, Mächler, Bolker, & Walker, 2015) with a random intercept to accommodate varying numbers of observations provided by each participant and calculated the average probability of negotiation occurrence for the entire population, along with its 95% confidence interval. We ran one overall model predicting the probability that a social interaction includes *any* negotiation dimension and eight specific models for each of the dimensions, respectively.

Negotiation and short-term happiness. To evaluate the relationship between negotiation and short-term changes in happiness, we followed procedures outlined by Taquet and colleagues (2016). We first created lagged pairs of observations ($t-1$ and t) for each participant, focusing on pairs of observations during which the participant reported involvement in social interaction between the two measurement times ($t-1 < \text{interaction} \leq t$). Imagine, for instance, a participant who completed four questionnaires. On the first questionnaire (10:00 AM), she reports interacting *now*. On the second questionnaire (2:00 PM), she reports having interacted *less than an hour ago*. On the third questionnaire (3:30 PM), she reports having interacted *over 2 hours ago*. Finally, on the fourth questionnaire (6:00 PM), she reports having interacted *less than*

30 min ago. In this case, we would create a first pair of observations for this participant in which Questionnaire 1 (10:00 AM) is labeled $t-1$ and Questionnaire 2 (2:00 PM) is labeled t , since an interaction happened in between (around 1:30 PM). We would not create a pair of observations between Questionnaires 2 and 3 since an interaction did not occur between the two measurement points. We would, however, create a second pair of observations for this participant in which Questionnaire 3 (3:30 PM) is labeled $t-1$ and Questionnaire 4 (6:00 PM) is labeled t , since an interaction happened in between (around 5:45 PM).

Next, we computed the mean difference in past and current happiness ($\Delta H = H_t - H_{t-1}$) for each pair of observations and used these change scores as our dependent variable in multilevel regression. Our main predictor was whether participants reported any negotiation dimensions during the interaction (0 = no; 1 = yes), and our control variables included the time of day, categorized into twelve 2-hour periods (ranging from 0:00:00 a.m.–1:59:59 a.m. to 10:00:00 p.m.–11:59:59 p.m.), the day of the week (distinguishing between weekdays and weekends), the social categories of people involved in the interaction (one dummy variable of each of the nine categories), the current activity reported by the participant, and latency effects. The latter accounts for the fact that interactions can span multiple measurement points and controls for the social interaction (nine dummy social category variables) and negotiation participants may have been involved in at the previous time point ($t-1$). Our model included a random intercept to account for the nested structure of the data, with participants each providing multiple pairs of observations.

Negotiation and longer-term happiness. To evaluate the relationship between negotiation and longer-term well-being, we computed the average frequency of negotiation for each participant across their reported social interactions. We then used this metric to predict

happiness and depression on the WHO-5 and PHQ-9 scales, respectively. To ensure that the relationship between one's propensity to negotiate and well-being is not confounded by obvious individual differences, we control for age, gender, the average frequency of interactions across different partner categories (Parent, Partner, Kid, Coworker, Stranger, Acquaintance, Friend, Relative, Other), the average closeness ratings attributed to these interactions, and the average frequency of daily activities (maintenance, work, and leisure). Additionally, to ensure the integrity of our measures of well-being, we excluded participants who omitted more than one item on the WHO-5 and PHQ-9 scales.

Results

Frequency of negotiation in everyday life

Our analyses revealed that 25.7% (95% CI [21.5% - 30.4%]) of all reported interactions involved at least one element of negotiation. The frequency of each negotiation dimension is depicted in Figure 1. There were no significant gender and age differences in the overall and specific prevalences of negotiation dimensions (see Supplementary Materials - Note 2).

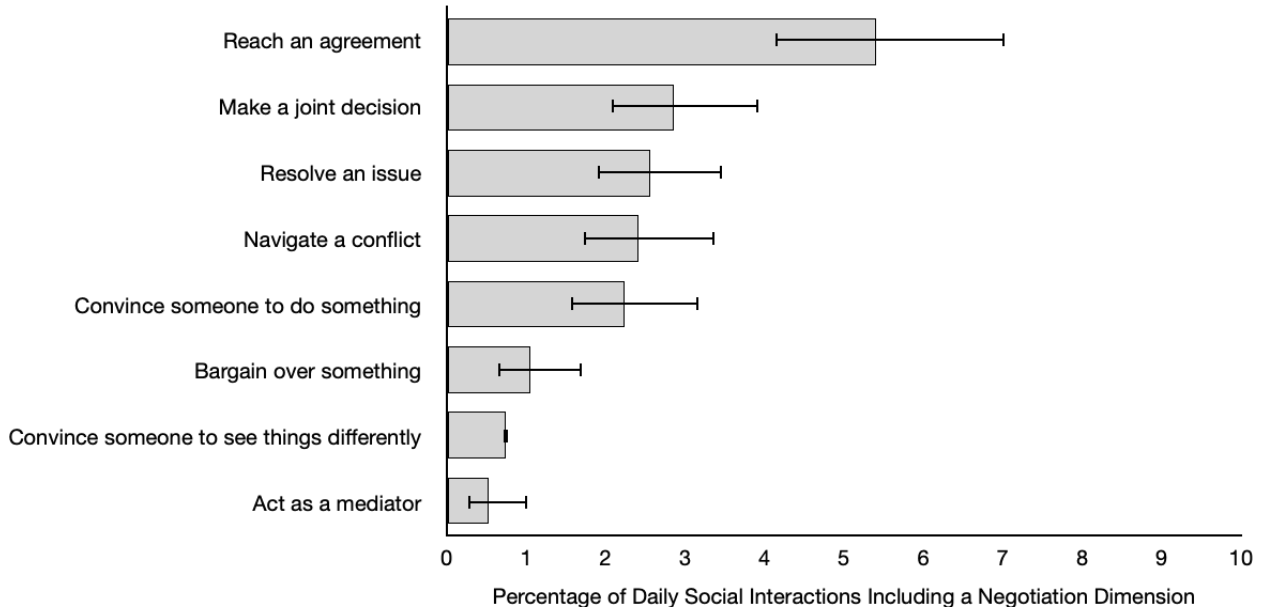


Figure 1. Frequency of Negotiation in Daily Interaction.

As exploratory analyses, we examined how the frequency of negotiation varied across interaction partners by adding a dummy variable for each social category in our regression model. Interactions with friends were less likely to involve negotiation dimensions ($b = -0.57, p = .003$). So were interactions with romantic partners ($b = -0.46, p = .002$) and parents ($b = -0.48, p = .01$). In contrast, interactions with coworkers were more likely to involve negotiation ($b = 1.33, p < .001$). Other social categories did not relate to negotiation (all $ps > .09$)

Negotiation and short-term well-being.

Results from our time-lagged multilevel linear regression revealed that compared to social interactions that did not involve negotiation, interactions that included at least one negotiation dimension were associated with a decrease in momentary happiness ($b = -0.18, t = -5.442, p < .001$). This effect was not moderated by gender ($b_{negotiating*gender} = 0.042, p = .50$) or age ($b_{negotiating*age} = -0.003, p = 0.20$).

Negotiation and longer-term well-being

Our results suggest that engaging in a negotiation has a short-term affective cost. But does it pay off in the long run? Results from our regression models provide some evidence for this idea. Participants' overall frequency of negotiation across their social interactions predicted general happiness ($b = 0.47, t = 2.01, p = 0.046$), over and above age, gender, the average frequency of interactions across different partner categories, the average closeness ratings attributed to these interactions, and the average frequency of daily activities. Although directionally consistent, the overall frequency of negotiation did not significantly predict lower depression symptoms ($b = -0.21, t = 1.58, p = 0.12$). Again, none of these relationships were moderated by gender (happiness: $b_{negotiation*gender} = 0.53, p = .30$; depression: $b_{negotiation*gender} = -0.29, p = .30$) or age (happiness: $b_{negotiation*age} = 0.011, p = .62$; depression: $b_{negotiation*age} = -0.001, p = .91$).

Discussion

In this study, we harnessed an app-based experience-sampling methodology to empirically test three widely-held assumptions about negotiation: (1) we negotiate every day, (2) people generally dislike it, yet (3) engaging in negotiation leads to happier lives. Our results, based on ecologically-valid data gathered beyond the confines of a laboratory, corroborate these three ideas. First, we found that negotiation is indeed woven into the fabric of everyday life, with nearly a quarter of all interactions involving some form of negotiation. Second, we confirmed that negotiation carries an emotional toll: individuals reported a XX% dip in short-term happiness following negotiation encounters. Finally, despite its challenges, our data revealed that negotiation shouldn't be avoided. Those who negotiated more often reported higher overall happiness. These findings reaffirm that negotiation, while sometimes daunting, is a fundamental

part of our social landscape and a crucial life skill with benefits that extend beyond the boardroom and contribute to overall well-being.

Our analyses further examine the distribution of negotiation across social categories and dimensions, providing a richer understanding of negotiation's role in daily life. We found that 'reaching an agreement' was the most common negotiation activity, transpiring in about 5.4% of interactions. This finding underscores previous research emphasizing the ubiquity of these negotiation tasks, which span from routine decisions to more intricate disputes (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). In contrast, 'bargaining over something' and 'acting as a mediator' were less common, appearing in only 1.1% and 0.5% of interactions, respectively. This discrepancy suggests that these formal negotiation tactics may be consigned to specific contexts or situations, a notion consistent with the understanding that negotiation strategies should adapt to the context (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). As for social categories, negotiation was a more prominent feature of interactions with coworkers, echoing past research on the significant role negotiation plays in professional contexts (Bazerman & Neale, 1992). Yet negotiation was less common in personal relationships, such as with friends, romantic partners, and parents. This observation doesn't diminish the role of negotiation skills in these domains, but rather points to the need for a nuanced understanding and application of negotiation strategies—ones that respect and preserve the unique emotional bonds and dynamics inherent to these relationships (Curhan, Elfenbein, & Xu, 2006).

An additional noteworthy aspect of our findings pertains to the lack of significant gender and age differences in the prevalence of negotiation dimensions. This suggests that negotiation permeates the fabric of human interactions universally, irrespective of gender or age. Our data did not support common stereotypes, such as men negotiating more frequently than women or negotiation frequency varying significantly with age. These findings align with recent

scholarship challenging traditional assumptions about gender and age in negotiation (Kray & Thompson, 2005; Amanatullah & Morris, 2010). They underscore that while gender and age can shape our experiences in myriad ways, they do not appear to influence the overall frequency of negotiation in everyday life substantially. These results contribute to a growing body of literature emphasizing the need to move beyond simplistic categorizations based on gender and age when examining complex social behaviors like negotiation.

Despite the commonality of negotiation in our social interactions, our findings suggest that negotiation carries a short-term affective cost, as evidenced by the decrease in momentary happiness following interactions involving negotiation. This is consistent with the literature highlighting the stress and cognitive load associated with negotiation (Curhan, Elfenbein, & Kilduff, 2009), as well as the potential negative affect induced by conflict, competition, or perceived inequities during negotiation processes (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011).

However, despite this short-term affective cost, our findings revealed a silver lining. Frequent engagement in negotiation predicted greater general happiness, which aligns with theories suggesting that successful negotiation can lead to feelings of self-efficacy, accomplishment, and control, which are associated with psychological well-being (Bandura, 1997; Locke & Latham, 2002). It may be that the short-term stress of negotiation is offset by the long-term benefits of better outcomes, enhanced relationships, and improved personal and professional circumstances. Nonetheless, negotiation did not significantly predict lower depression symptoms, suggesting that the psychological benefits of negotiation may be specific to positive aspects of well-being, rather than a reduction in negative mental health symptoms. This is an important distinction and suggests that negotiation skills may be more closely aligned with the promotion of positive psychological states rather than the mitigation of negative ones.

The present study provides important groundwork for further research into the real-world implications of negotiation. Future research might delve into the specific mechanisms that underlie the long-term happiness benefits of negotiation, as well as the factors that might help individuals better manage short-term affective costs. Moreover, it would be insightful to explore how different negotiation styles, strategies, and techniques might differentially affect well-being outcomes. Such an investigation could guide the development of more effective negotiation training programs, with the dual aims of enhancing negotiation outcomes and promoting psychological well-being.

Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations. First, our sample was recruited from the Prolific platform, which may not be fully representative of the general population. Future research could examine the negotiation experiences of more diverse samples, including individuals from different cultural and professional backgrounds. Second, our study focused on the self-reported negotiation experiences of participants. Future research could complement this approach with more objective measures of negotiation, such as behavioral observations or third-party evaluations. Finally, our study employed cross-sectional and longitudinal designs, which precludes causal inferences. Future research could employ experimental designs to establish better the causal relationships between negotiation dimensions and happiness.

In conclusion, our study underscores the salience of negotiation in everyday life and its implications for well-being. While negotiation might have a short-term emotional cost, its long-term benefits for general happiness suggest its important role in our social fabric. It may be that becoming more adept negotiators not only helps us navigate our social and professional landscapes more effectively but also contributes to our broader happiness and well-being.

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Supplementary Materials

Note 1: MindSampler App & Experience-Sampling Items

Participants were recruited on Prolific and presented with the following infographic upon accepting the task.



Note 2: Prevalences of negotiation dimensions by gender

