

To thine own self be true on Facebook

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Individuals who express themselves more authentically on Facebook tend to report higher levels of subjective well-being. The findings, published in *Nature Communications*, suggest that if users engage in self-expression on social media, there may be psychological benefits associated with being authentic.

Nearly 80% of Americans use some form of social media, and three quarters of users check their accounts on a daily basis. However, it has been suggested that trends towards self-idealization on these platforms may be detrimental to individual well-being.

By analyzing data from 10,560 Facebook users collected from 2007–2012, Erica Bailey and colleagues investigated the impact of self-idealization and authenticity on well-being on social media. First, users completed a series of psychometric tests including a measure of the Big Five [personality traits](#) (an established personality model measuring traits including agreeableness and extraversion). To estimate authenticity on social media, the authors compared an individual's self-reported personality (based on psychometric tests) to their personality on social media as predicted by a computer model based on their likes and the language used in their status updates on Facebook. They found that authentic self-expression was correlated with higher self-reported levels of Life Satisfaction—a measure of overall well-being. The effect also appeared to be consistent across different personality types.

In a separate study involving 90 participants with an average age of 23 years old, the authors found that individuals who were asked to post more authentically on [social media](#) reported higher levels of subjective well-being.

More information: Erica R. Bailey et al. Authentic self-expression on social media is associated with greater subjective well-being, *Nature Communications* (2020). [DOI: 10.1038/s41467-020-18539-w](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-18539-w)

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