

steps and see how you feel. Remember, "Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is fear walking" (Susan David Ph.D).

## 2. Connect

Harvard University's longest study of adult life (started in 1938) shows that "social connections are really good for us and that loneliness kills... It turns out that people who are more socially connected to family, friends, and community are happier. They are physically healthier and live longer than people who are less well connected."

I know for those of us living away from our extended families and the networks of friends we grew up with, making deep and meaningful connections can seem difficult. Rather than using this as an excuse to stay isolated, why not see it as a golden chance: an opportunity to find and surround ourselves by people that can help us shine and feel the way we really want. To do this, first, you'll have to ask yourself who you want to be in this new phase of your life and what kind of people you need to support you in this

journey. For instance, if you are looking to become a mumpreneur and start your own business, try joining groups like the Boss-mom movement, co-working spaces, or on-line platforms like the Female Entrepreneurship Association, to name a few. View your new interactions as an opportunity to be the you that feels most authentic at this moment in time. And know that you don't have to conform to old labels or expectations you may have grown up with.

On a practical level, if you feel uncomfortable or too shy to put yourself out there, check out Vanessa Van Edwards the Science of People website. She describes herself as a 'recovering awkward person' and has many helpful posts, including one called "Learn how to make friends as an adult in 5 steps."

## 3. Laugh

There is nothing like a good laugh to act as an injection of relief in times of stress. And luckily now science is starting to highlight the healing effects of laughter and how we can harness these for greater emotional well-being.

Tamara Lechner from the Chopra Centre explains that laughter can:

- Reduce the stress response
- Boost immunity
- Increase resilience
- Combat depression
- And relieve pain.

And we can experience the benefits mentioned above by 'choosing to laugh'. Sebastian Gendry, founder of the Laughter Online University, says you can always laugh even when you don't feel like it. Just do it, because you can! A reason is not required. He explains that whether you connect to genuine laughter or not, it doesn't matter, your body will still experience the benefits.

Finally, I'd like to invite you to commit to these practices or any others that feed your soul. Make self-care a priority and know that taking time to step out of your comfort zone, connect with others and laugh as suggested here is not selfish. It's essential for your emotional well-being, for your happiness and that of those around you.



# BAMBI Sathorn Small World

Text by Chayuda Pieterse Photos by Mao Sano

Every Tuesday, BAMBI holds a playgroup dedicated to babies to prewalkers in the heart of Sathorn at the family friendly café Jumping Beans. Babies can explore the surroundings on a soft, clean mat with a variety of toys, while the grown-ups can socialize and get a freshly brewed cup of coffee, and delicious and healthy food and desserts.

*SATHORN SMALL WORLD BABY PLAYGROUP: Tuesday, 9:30–11:30am. BAMBI's dedicated playgroup for babies, rollers crawlers and waddlers. Donation per family: ฿100 for BAMBI members and ฿300 for non-members. Jumping Bean Cafe, 170/21 Soi Suan Phlu, Sathorn. Parking is very limited. For more information, email: [playgroups@bambiweb.org](mailto:playgroups@bambiweb.org).*

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