

Unfriendly acts don't just make you see others through ugly eyes, they create havoc within your body, too.

Unfriendliness manufactures what researchers call a "negative emotional experience."

Simply put, here's how it works: Our brain sends a signal to our body's command centers to react to unfriendliness by deploying hormones. As best-selling author Deepak Chopra says, "Where a thought goes, a chemical follows."

Two hormones are especially relevant to your emotional state: DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) and cortisol. Think of DHEA as the feel-good hormone, while cortisol makes you feel stressed out.

When you encounter unfriendliness, your cortisol level increases, prompting the symptoms of stress. You can feel a rush of blood to your face, a sudden heat, a pounding chest, the sweats, and perhaps even minor shaking.

This spike in your cortisol level doesn't only make you feel bad when the problem occurs. Over time, as you encounter the unfriendly person over and over, it can lead to chronic problems from a poor immune system to increased blood pressure.

On the other hand, friendliness creates a positive emotional experience, as well as a positive physical

reaction. Your DHEA increases, decreasing your stress and slowing down your heart rate. This is why simple acts of friendliness can make you feel as if you have the wind beneath your wings.

One of our survey interviewees, Miranda, remembers taking piano lessons as a child from a hostile teacher who made Miranda feel unwelcome in her house--so unwelcome that Miranda would go home feeling sick every time. Eventually she even felt ill before each lesson, so much so that she begged her parents to let her stop. Miranda eventually switched instruments, and today is a violinist with her city's symphony orchestra. She says one reason she did well with the violin was due to her next teacher's friendliness. He made her feel so welcome that she felt good to be around him, and practiced extra-hard to please him.

When people are friendly and positive, you feel great and enjoy their presence.