

## **The human moment at work**

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Email and voice mail may seem to be efficient means of communication. But face to face contacts are still needed for true communication. The human moment, an authentic psychological encounter, can happen only when two people share the same physical space. The human moment involves both physical presence and emotional/intellectual attention.

Human moments require energy. That is what makes them easy to avoid. But human moments need not be time consuming or draining. They can be brisk, business like and debrief. Even a good five minute conversation can be effective.

Human moments can help people to think in new and creative ways. They can stimulate mental activity. But we must engage in human moments regularly for them to have a meaningful impact.

Human beings are remarkably resilient. They can deal with any situation as long as they do not become too isolated. But unfortunately, as electronic forms of communication dominate, the human moments are rapidly disappearing and isolation is increasing. As a result, oversensitivity, self-doubt and abrasiveness are on the rise.

Alienation in the workplace is increasing not because of lack of communication but due to a surplus of the wrong kind. The remedy is not to get rid of electronic communication but to restore the human moment when needed.

Electronic communication removes many of the cues that typically mitigate worry. Body language, tone of voice and facial expression are an important part of face to face conversations. But they are completely missing in emails. The human moment is like light in a dark room. It illuminates dark corners and dispels suspicions and fears. Without the human moment, worry and anxiety increase.

Electronic communication adds to anxiety by creating little misunderstandings. Email messages are often misunderstood. People may take offense at being left out of a DL. As the number of human moments decreases, the scope for misunderstandings increases.

The human moment acts as a regulator. If it is taken away, primitive instincts get the better of people. Not surprisingly, rude and abrupt behaviors start dominating the work place.

Technology has created a new world, a world full of opportunities. It has opened up a knowledge based economy and people need not be bound to their desks. But we cannot progress as a society without the human moment. The human moment brings zest and colour to our daily lives, restores us, strengthens us and makes us whole. Human moments can reduce the confusion and ambiguity associated with electronic communications and improve confidence and trust in the work place.