

CONNECTIONS

Meet the *Real* You

You think you know yourself—but your friends may know you even better

● Get ready to apologize. You've been correcting your friends' opinions of you for years—but they were likely right all along. In a recent study at Washington University in St. Louis, people took a series of tests (such as an IQ exam) and rated themselves on a 40-question personality scale—evaluating their neuroticism, extroversion, and intellect. They then briefly met with friends and strangers, who rated them on the same scale. The study subjects more accurately rated their internal emotional traits, which

makes sense: It's hard for others to know what you're feeling. But friends more accurately rated intellectual traits. And strangers were as good as friends and the subjects themselves when judging extrovert traits such as leadership and talkativeness.

We're less accurate judges than our friends are of our intelligence and creativity because those are hard to evaluate objectively, says researcher Simine Vazire, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at the university. So

if your loved ones opine about how you *feel*, feel free to reject their opinions. But if they comment on your personality—whether you're funny, for instance—be open-minded, even if you disagree. "Don't believe everything you think about yourself," Vazire says. "Personality is not who you *think* you are; it's who you are." —Leslie Quander Wooldridge



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIETTE BORDA

Stop stressing. Start **living.**



You've got better things to do than worry about debt.

That's why we're here to help. We're InCharge Debt Solutions, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing help and hope to those struggling with debt and searching for solutions.

We can work with your creditors to:

- Stop collection calls
- Combine payments into one
- Reduce interest rates
- Avoid over-limit fees and late charges

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Call us toll-free at **877-267-0464** for your **FREE** confidential consultation with a certified credit counselor.



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THE BEST
OF YOUR LIFE

CONNECTIONS

Meet the Real You

Sometimes your friends know you best of all

■ Get ready to apologize. You've been correcting your friends' opinions of you for years—but they were likely right. In a recent study at Washington University in St. Louis, people took a series of tests (such as an IQ exam) and rated themselves on a personality scale—evaluating their neuroticism, extroversion, and intellect. They later met with friends and strangers, who

also rated them. Individuals more accurately rated their internal emotional traits, which makes sense: It's hard for others to know what you feel. But friends more accurately rated intellectual traits. And strangers were as good as friends and subjects when judging extrovert traits. We're less accurate judges than our friends are of our intelligence and creativity because

those are hard to evaluate objectively, says researcher Simine Vazire, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at the university. So if friends opine about how you *feel*, feel free to reject their opinions. But if they comment on your personality, be open-minded. "Personality is not who you *think* you are; it's who you are," Vazire says.

—Leslie Quander Wooldridge

A photograph of a woman standing in a vast field of yellow and orange tulips. The field is surrounded by trees, and the scene is brightly lit.

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Feeling Sulky? Have a Snack

■ If you're putting the *grrr* in grouchy, you may need more glucose. Low glucose levels affect self-control because we lack the energy required to stop ourselves from snapping. Researchers at three U.S. universities recently asked people to fast before taking an aggression test. Those who drank a glass of sugar-sweetened lemonade before the test acted less aggressively than those who drank lemonade with a sugar substitute (which didn't affect glucose levels). If you're ornery, try a piece of fruit to restore your glucose levels. And if a loved one is moody, try to understand. "Giving people the benefit of the doubt can help smooth over relationships," says Brad Bushman, Ph.D., the study's coauthor. —Sandra McLean

FROM TOP: ILLUSTRATION BY JULIETTE BORDA; PHOTO: ILLUSTRATION BY JOANNA FOUCHEUX (PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES)