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# UNDERESTIMATING NEARBY NATURE



## Affective Forecasting Errors Obscure the Happy Path to Sustainability

**What is affect?**

It is the experience of feeling or emotions and can be negative or positive

**Carleton University students** were randomly assigned to an indoor walking route (tunnel path) or an outdoor walking route (by the canal) in 2 studies

## DITCH THE TUNNELS, WALK OUTSIDE!

The authors found that outdoor walks in nearby nature made participants happier than indoor walks did. Participants who walked outdoors reported **more positive affect, relaxation, and fascination**, and **less negative affect** than those who walked indoors.



**Fig. 1.** Positive affect of forecasters and experiencers as a function of walking route (indoor or outdoor). Forecasters rated their anticipated affect, and experiencers rated their actual affect.



Participants make **affective forecasting errors**, such that they would fail to anticipate their enjoyment of the outdoors. Therefore people fail to maximize their time in nearby nature and **miss opportunities to increase their happiness and relatedness to nature.**

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Their findings suggest a **happy path to sustainability**, whereby contact with **nature fosters individual happiness and environmentally responsible behavior.**

