

Excerpt from *The Human Moment at Work* by Edward M. Hallowell

At an electronics company, a talented brand manager is growing increasingly alienated. The problem started when his division head didn't return a phone call for several days. She said she never got the message. Then the brand manager noticed that he hadn't been invited to an important meeting with a new advertising agency. What's wrong with my performance? He wonders. The man wants to raise the question with the division manager, but the opportunity never seems to arise. All their communication is by memo, email, or voice mail, which they exchange often. But they almost never meet. For one thing, their offices are 50 miles apart, and for another, both of them are frequently on the road. During the rare moments when they do see each other in person -on the run in a corridor or in the parking lot at corporate headquarters -it is usually inappropriate or impossible to discuss complex matters. And so the issues (or *perceived* issues) between them smolder.

In this scenario, the executive's anxiety has a simple antidote: a face-to-face conversation. Both individuals are driving themselves crazy for no reason. But to learn that, they need to reconnect. They need to experience what I call *the human moment*: an authentic psychological encounter that can happen only when two people share the same physical space. I have *given the human moment* a name because I believe that it has started to disappear from modern life -and I sense that we all may be about to discover the destructive power of its absence.

The human moment has two pre-requisites: people's physical presence and their emotional and intellectual attention. That's it!

Note of Interest: Scientists hypothesize that in-person contact stimulates two important neurotransmitters: dopamine, which enhances attention and pleasure, and serotonin, which reduces fear and worry.

Reference: Harvard Business Review, Reprint 99104