

Take the
Joy Test

research conducted by: **IMMEDIATE**

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Executive Summary: The Joy Advantage

“Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.”

- Aristotle

In today's world, shaped by cost of living pressures, anxiety, digital overload and an always-on news cycle, the question of what actually makes us happy has never felt more important.

Wellbeing in the UK has reached what the ONS describes as a state of stagnant stability, with life satisfaction and happiness scores remaining unchanged since 2020 and failing to recover to pre-pandemic levels, with more than one in five people reporting high levels of daily anxiety.

Against this backdrop Immediate, home to some of the UK's most loved brands, wanted to understand what emotional impact our leisure activities have on us - and what role the brands that support them play in that experience.

The Joy Test

Immediate commissioned the University of Sussex to conduct one of the largest studies of its kind: a wide-ranging research project with nearly 10,000 participants and six focus groups.

The Joy Test sought to understand not just what brings us joy, but why - and what that means for the brands and content that sit at the heart of people's leisure activities.

The results reveal leisure activities are far more than ways to pass the time. They play a fundamental role in supporting our wellbeing. The research also explored how some of the

most commonly engaged with activities - cooking, gardening, TV and radio consumption - bring us joy and increase happiness and wellbeing.

We also discovered a paradox at the heart of modern life: we're spending the most time on the activity that brings us the least joy. Scrolling social media is the single most frequent leisure activity in the UK but the lowest-rated of all 21 activities studied for the joy it delivers. The algorithm optimises for attention, not for happiness.

The research also explored how our leisure interests function as powerful social currency. The majority of gardeners, cooks, TV viewers, and radio listeners regularly discuss their interests with others and this social dimension is directly associated with greater wellbeing and lower mental health difficulties.

In a world where people feel increasingly digitally connected but individually isolated, the communities that form around shared passions carry real and growing value.





The role of Immediate's brands in bringing joy

The research also explored what role media content, specifically Immediate's brands focused on cooking, gardening and entertainment (TV and radio) content, played in relation to people's leisure activities and the emotional impact it had on them.

The more people engaged with Immediate's brand touchpoints, across print, digital, social, podcast, and live events, the more joy, flow, intrinsic motivation, and perceived competence they experienced in relation to their chosen leisure activity. Immediate's content doesn't just reflect its audiences' passions, it actively deepens them.

In a world of infinite AI-generated content and algorithm-driven feeds, the environments where people feel most joyful, absorbed, and trusting are also where brands make their most meaningful connections.

Content and experiences built around activities that genuinely enrich people's lives do more than just engage audiences - they help to enrich their lives. In this environment people are more likely to lean in to commercial messages, prompting tangible actions.

Section 2

Executive Summary: The Joy Advantage

We all instinctively know that some activities make us feel better than others. But what does the science actually tell us? In our research we wanted to understand more about how people are engaging in these leisure activities, the reasons for the choices they make, and the perceived impact of these experiences.

To answer these questions, Immediate partnered with researchers at the University of Sussex to conduct what became one of the largest studies of its kind - The Joy Test.

The Research: Working with the University of Sussex

Led by Professor Robin Banerjee, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global and Civic Engagement and Professor of Developmental Psychology at the University of Sussex, the study explored the emotional, motivational, and psychological dimensions of how people spend their leisure time - and what happens to their sense of joy when they do.

The scale of the dataset makes this one of the most comprehensive studies of the relationship between leisure activities, joy, and psychological wellbeing conducted in the UK.



Professor Robin Banerjee
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global and Civic Engagement
Professor of Developmental Psychology
University of Sussex

The psychology of joy: intrinsic vs extrinsic motivation

The research measured the motivational and psychological experience of people's leisure activities - including intrinsic motivation, flow, and immersion.

Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging with an activity for internal, self-determined reasons: the inherent satisfaction, enjoyment, and personal growth it provides.

Extrinsic motivation is measured through people's broader life aspirations, such as wanting to be admired by others, keep up with fashion, or being financially successful.

Flow is a state of deep absorption in an activity. You lose track of time, self-consciousness fades, and the doing the activity becomes the reward. The gardeners in the focus groups captured this sense of flow perfectly: "You go outside just to do one small thing and three hours later you're like, why am I in my pyjamas?"

Immersion is the feeling of being drawn so completely absorbed into an activity that it carries you beyond your immediate surroundings.

Across all leisure activities studied, joy was much more strongly correlated with intrinsic motivation than with extrinsic drivers. The deeper people engaged with activities for their own intrinsic value, the more joy, flow, immersion, and wellbeing they experienced.




"The study provides compelling evidence that an important key to psychological fulfilment and wellbeing could lie in being more intentional with our leisure time. These findings highlight the importance of dedicating time to hobbies that are emotionally rewarding and socially enriching, offering a powerful blueprint for maximising personal wellbeing."



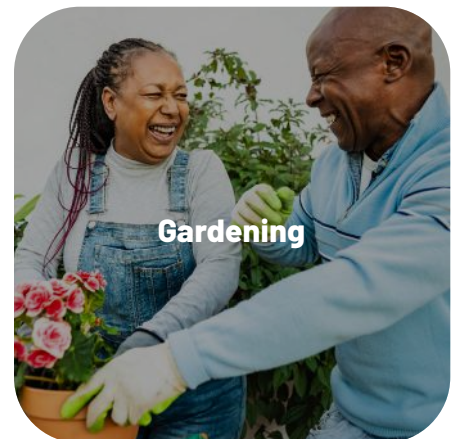
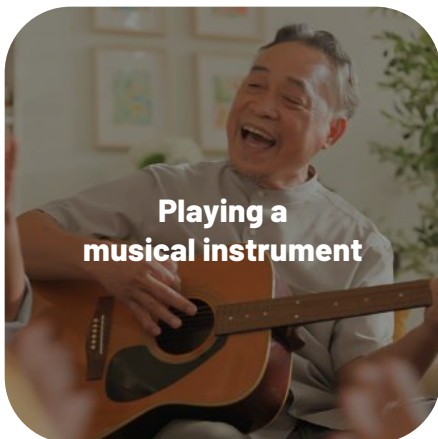
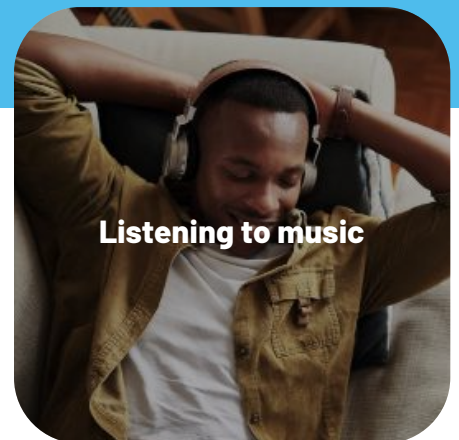
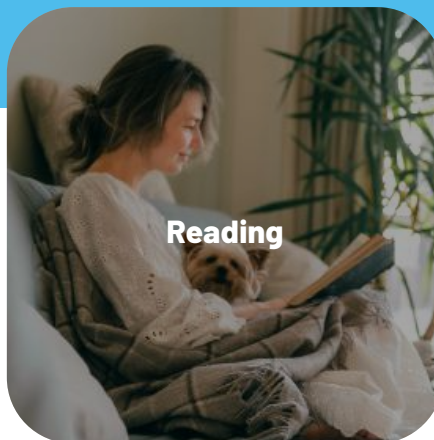
Professor Robin Banerjee,
School of Psychology, University of Sussex

The Joy Hierarchy: What Really Brings Us Joy?

The survey rated 21 different leisure activities on three factors:

-  The percentage of people engaging in the different leisure activities in their free time
-  The average frequency of participation (on a scale from 1 = less often than once a week to 5 = every day)
-  The average level of joy respondents experienced from this activity (on a scale from 1 = not at all to 7 = extremely).

The activities that rated highest for joy were the most intentional and immersive:



These are activities that reward attention, skill or presence.

Of Immediate's content activities, **Gardening** ranked fourth in terms of participation (62% of respondents engaged with it) delivering a joy score of 5.94 out of 7, **cooking and baking** (60% participation) scored 5.55.

Radio, though engaged with by just under half of respondents, was described by those who loved it with deep warmth and emotional connection. **TV**, the most widely consumed of all leisure activities at 85% participation, delivered a meaningful joy boost despite sitting lower on the overall joy ranking than more active pursuits.

The doomscrolling paradox

#1

for frequency

4.55/5.0

average frequency

4.05/7.0

average joy

Perhaps the most illuminating finding of the dataset sits at the bottom of that joy ranking. Social media browsing was the single most frequently engaged with activity of all 21 surveyed among Immediate audiences with the highest average frequency score of 4.55 out of 5. But it was also rated the lowest of all 21 activities for the joy it brought into people's lives, scoring just 4.05 out of 7.

This is the doomscrolling paradox. We are spending the most time on the activity that brings us the least reward. Most of us have felt the dissatisfaction of time spent scrolling. The compulsive reach for the phone, the sense afterwards that we have consumed a great deal and absorbed very little.

This finding has seen significant media coverage, coinciding with Government proposals to ban social media for under 16s and restrict 'infinite scrolling'.

That is not to say social media can't be used in a positive way. The challenge for content creators is to create content that 'nourishes, not numbs' as our strategy director Katy Gotch describes it. The focus of Immediate's brands social content is aimed at inspiring our audiences to get more out the things they love – whether that's cooking, gardening or catching-up on the latest TV big hit.

“Advertising environments are not neutral. A brand that appears alongside content designed to trigger anxiety, outrage, or compulsion inhabits a very different emotional space from one that appears in a context of aspiration, creativity, and fulfilment, based on a foundation of trusted passion-led editorial. This differentiation is crucial in a world of addictive algorithms and AI-generated slop.”



Cath Waller

Managing Director, Advertising
Immediate

Before and After: The Emotional Uplift of Intentional Leisure

One of the most powerful elements of the Joy Test design was its before-and-after measurement of emotional state. Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1-5, how happy, relaxed, and excited they felt immediately before and immediately after taking part in their chosen leisure activity.

Across all four leisure activities - gardening, cooking and baking, watching TV, and listening to the radio - there were positive, statistically significant improvements in all three emotional reactions. Every activity, done with intention, made people feel measurably better.

The gains were highest for gardening, followed by cooking. Whether someone spent the afternoon planting, baked a loaf of bread, settled in for a drama, or listened to a favourite radio programme, they came out of the experience in a better emotional state than they entered it.

“The finding that developing skills and a sense of mastery, whether over a new recipe or a rose bush, translates into a deeper sense of life satisfaction is critical. Activities such as gardening and cooking can offer a powerful sense of fulfilment and achievement, and these activities, along with watching TV and listening to the radio, can also help us feel connected and offer comfort.”



Professor Robin Banerjee,
School of Psychology, University of Sussex

Title here: ideally across two lines

The psychology of joy

The Joy Test reveals strong correlations between our personality, our values, our sense of trust in the world with what we choose to do with our leisure time. And the ways we choose to engage with those interests has a direct, measurable effect on how much joy we experience.

47%

Gardeners are more likely to score highly on conscientiousness than the average respondent

26%

Cooks and bakers are more likely to be highly extraverted

You are what you do

After controlling for age, gender, and income, the research found meaningful correlations between personality traits and people's chosen leisure activities.



Gardeners were the most conscientious of all four groups. They are 47% more likely to score highly on conscientiousness than the average respondent. They also reported above-average wellbeing, life satisfaction, and physical health.



Cooks and bakers were 26% more likely to be highly extraverted. They also scored higher on openness and conscientiousness, and reported greater wellbeing, life satisfaction, and lower mental health difficulties.



Radio listeners stood out for generalised trust in others and openness to experience – 16% more likely to score in the highest group for openness. They are also, the data shows, highly receptive to learning: 73% said expanding their knowledge was often or always a key motivation for listening.

Connecting on our passions

One of the most consistent and significant findings of the Joy Test is social element of people's activities - talking about an interest amplifies the joy of engaging with it - and those who discuss their leisure activities more frequently report greater wellbeing, higher generalised trust in others, and lower mental health difficulties.

The majority of people reported talking about their chosen activity at least sometimes:

88%



of gardeners

86%



of cooks and bakers

80%



of TV viewers

77%

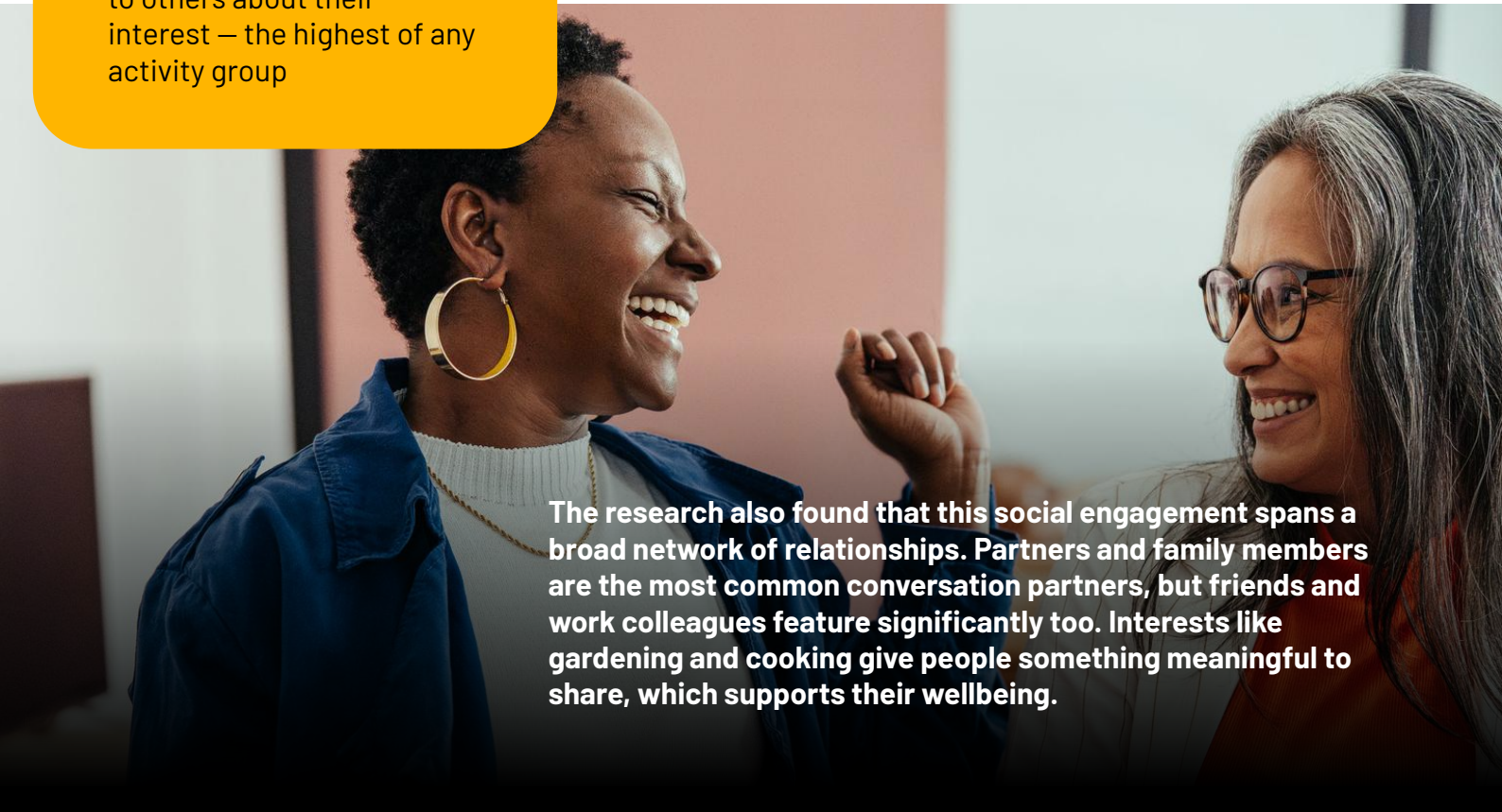


of radio listeners

These are not passive hobbyists, they are communities of interest.

88%

of gardeners regularly talk to others about their interest – the highest of any activity group



The research also found that this social engagement spans a broad network of relationships. Partners and family members are the most common conversation partners, but friends and work colleagues feature significantly too. Interests like gardening and cooking give people something meaningful to share, which supports their wellbeing.

Immediate brands deepen joy

The research found a clear and statistically significant relationship: the more Immediate brand touchpoints people had engaged with, the more joy, intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, flow, and immersion they experienced in relation to their chosen leisure activity.

Correlations ranged from .09 to .25 across these psychological variables - highly significant across a dataset of this scale. The causal direction cannot be determined from a single-timepoint study, but the

pattern is consistent with a virtuous cycle: engaging with brand content deepens knowledge and skill, which increases confidence and flow, which intensifies the joy of the activity itself, which draws people back to the brand for more.

Across the three Immediate brands studied, the most emotionally resonant responses to touchpoint engagement were feeling inspired (especially for Gardeners' World and Good Food) and feeling curious (especially for Radio Times).

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Rob Hunt
Director of X

The power of shared passion

The social dimension of these interests, offers opportunities for memorable brand engagement.

When people gather around a shared passion, in person or online, they're in a heightened state of engagement, openness, and trust. This is an environment in which brands can interact meaningfully, not just advertise with positive impact on outputs to – from brand consideration to purchase.



Immediate Live events already demonstrate this at scale. With an average audience dwell time of five to six hours and an NPS score of 70 across all events, Immediate's live experiences deliver deep, sustained engagement. Audiences are fully present, for hours, in an environment shaped entirely around the interests that bring them most joy.

5-6 hours
Average dwell time at Immediate Live events – more than twice the length of a visit to the cinema or theatre


NPS 70
Average Net Promoter Score across Immediate Live events

SOURCES

The Joy Test: Preliminary Results – University of Sussex / Immediate Media, August 2025

The Joy Test: Press Releases – Consumer and Trade versions, January 2026

Immediate Live event data – dwell time and NPS scores, sourced from Dominic Lobley, InPublishing, March 2026



Section 4

Deep Dive: Gardening

Of the four leisure activities studied, gardening stands out most clearly and consistently as a source of deep, enduring joy. Gardeners scored highly across almost every psychological measure in the research. Happiness in the moment, flow, enthusiasm, intrinsic motivation, and a profound sense of achievement. Understanding why reveals something important about what makes certain leisure experiences more joyful than others and what that means for the brands that serve this audience.

Focus group participants described the experience of ‘flow’ vividly and repeatedly, often without using the word itself: hours spent outside that felt like minutes, unconsciously in the act of doing.

The research also found that gardening produces the highest scores for intrinsic motivation overall of the activities studied. Gardeners are not doing it to impress others or to keep up with trends. They are doing it for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself.

The most frequently cited motivations were mental relaxation (81% said this was often or always true for them) and a sense of personal fulfillment and achievement, cited by 71% of gardeners. These are not passive pleasures. They are earned ones.

5.94 / 7

Gardening’s joy score — the highest of the content verticals and fourth overall

81%

of gardeners cite mental relaxation as often or always a key motivation for gardening

A multi-sensory, visceral experience

The Focus Groups described the positive psychological impacts in more detail, emphasising gardening's emotional power to connect physical and sensory satisfaction. It's one of the few leisure activities that fully engages the body. The hands in the soil, the visible evidence of growth and change. These sensory dimensions are central to the experience of gardening.

One of the research's most consistent findings about gardening was the profound sense of personal achievement and fulfilment. The garden is a place where effort produces tangible, visible results. You can see what you have done, and watch it grow. That relationship between effort and visible outcome

connects directly to what the research identifies as gardening's psychological strength. The experience of flow, and the deep sense of intrinsic motivation that comes with it.

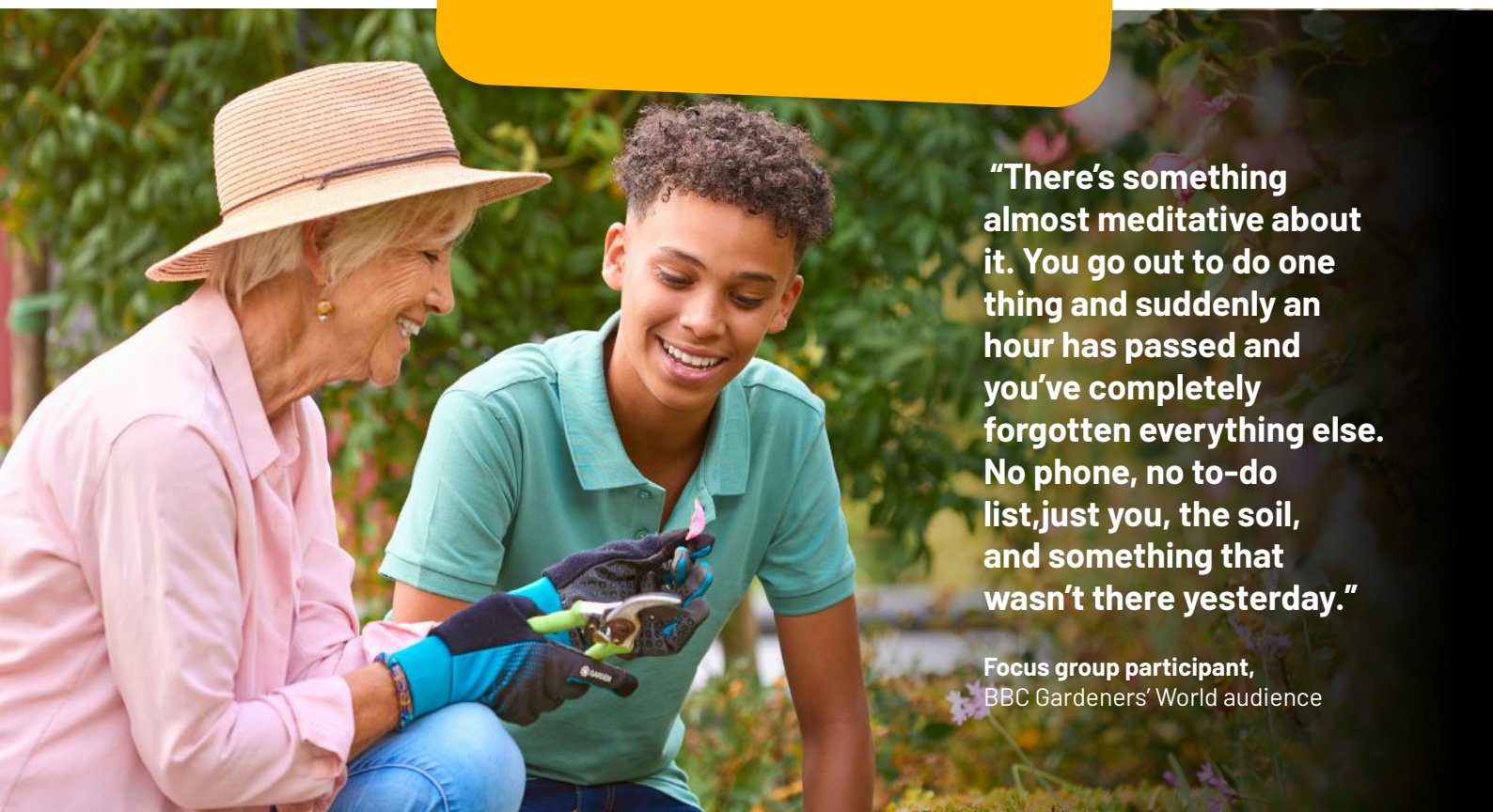
Gardening also carries a distinctive emotional texture that the qualitative research captured well. Participants described feelings of calm, connection, and restoration that went beyond simple relaxation. A sense of being grounded, literally and figuratively, by contact with the natural world.

For several gardening was the one time in their day when they felt fully present and absorbed.

'Make a Metre Matter'

"There's something almost meditative about it. You go out to do one thing and suddenly an hour has passed and you've completely forgotten everything else. No phone, no to-do list, just you, the soil, and something that wasn't there yesterday."

**Focus group participant,
BBC Gardeners' World audience**



Engaging with BBC Gardeners' World

The Joy Test found that engaging with BBC Gardeners' World touchpoints was most strongly associated with feeling inspired and motivated, with 15.2% of emotional responses centred on inspiration and 14.1% on motivation, the two dominant feelings generated by the brand.

The most widely cited perceived impact was becoming more knowledgeable (19%), followed by gaining inspiration (14%) and being encouraged to try new things (12%). In the focus groups, BBC Gardeners' World magazine was read primarily for pure enjoyment, described as relaxing, comforting, and non-anxiety-inducing. Participants dipped into it across the whole month, treating it as a pleasure rather than a reference tool.

Meanwhile 62.9% of Gardeners' World respondents engaged with three or more brand touchpoints - the highest multi-platform engagement of any brand in the study.



The BBC Gardeners' World team has been serving the needs of the UK's gardeners with fresh ideas and clear advice for over 30 years. Gardeners are among the most engaged, loyal and high-spending in the UK leisure sector. With a total monthly brand reach of 3.2 million and a trust score of 81% - the highest in the gardening and home sector - this is an audience that acts on what it reads.

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Kevin Smith
Director of X

Deep Dive: Cooking & Baking

Where gardening's joy is rooted in a deep physical and sensory engagement with the natural world, cooking's joy can be more immediately rewarding, creative, and deeply social. It's an activity that makes people feel capable, connected, and proud.

57%

rated cooking and baking 6-7/7 for joy

Achievement, competence and flow

57% of those who chose cooking and baking as their most joyful activity rated it 6 or 7 out of 7 on the joyfulness scale. The research identifies the dominant emotional impact is a sense of fulfilment, having something interesting to do, and an outlet for creativity.

#1

for perceived competence

Cooking and baking scored highest on two specific psychological dimensions of the four leisure activities the research focused on: perceived competence and task-oriented flow. Perceived competence is the feeling of being genuinely skilled at something, the confidence coming from knowing a technique works, that your judgement can be trusted, that you are getting better.

51%

motivated by skill-building

Task-oriented flow is the absorption from active, purposeful doing: following a method with focus, making decisions in real time, producing something tangible at the end.

Together, these findings paint a picture of cooking as an activity that engages people at the level of identity and capability, not just pleasure. Developing new skills and abilities was often or always a dominant motivation for 51% of cooks and bakers, making skill-building one of the most consistent drivers of engagement in the entire study.

Creative, social and savvy

Creativity and sharing are central to the joy of cooking in a way that distinguishes it from the other activities studied. Cooks and bakers are 26% more likely than average to be highly extraverted. They are people who want to share what they make, swap ideas, and cook for others. 86% reported regularly talking to others about their interest. The research found this social dimension was directly associated with greater wellbeing and lower mental health difficulties.

One of the most interesting findings was around the specific types of cooking that generates the most joy. The research found that batch cooking and creatively using leftovers brings more immediate happiness than complex or special occasion meals.

This highlights that the joy of cooking is often most powerful in its most everyday forms. The quiet competence of making something good from what's already in the fridge, the satisfaction of a meal that will feed the family for three days shows joy from cooking can come from being savvy.

This has editorial and commercial relevance. It's the kind of practical, confidence-building food content that Good Food has always specialised in and suggests that audiences respond most deeply not to aspirational complexity, but to content that makes them feel more capable in their everyday cooking lives.

"I enjoy talking to my children about cooking and helping them learn how to cook... I want my kids to both have a love of food. I see that kind of as a duty, as well as something I enjoy doing now."

Focus group participant

Engaging with Good Food

26%

Cooks and bakers are more likely to be highly extraverted than the average respondent

13m

Monthly UK users of Good Food – the UK's number one food media brand

Feeling inspired was also the dominant emotional response to Good Food touchpoints, with inspiration the single highest-scoring emotional response at 17.0%. Curiosity (12.2%) and excitement (4.7%) followed. The most cited perceived impact was giving inspiration (20%), followed by making respondents more knowledgeable (14%) and encouraging them to try new things (19%). In the focus groups, Good Food was described as a source of recipe inspiration and motivation for trying something new. 37.7% of Good Food respondents engaged with three or more touchpoints.

SOURCES

The Joy Test: Preliminary Results – University of Sussex / Immediate Media, August 2025

The Joy Test: Press Releases – Consumer and Trade versions, January 2026

Good Food: Sales Story / Media Pack 2026 – Immediate Media


IPSOS Iris Oct–Dec 2025 (3m average); GF NPS Survey May 2025

Good Food Show visitor data – Summer, Winter and Hampton Court Food Festival

‘Good Health by Good Food’

Good Food is the UK's number one food media brand, with 13 million monthly audience, across print, digital, audio, video and live events. 81% of Good Food users say it is a brand they trust. These are people who come to Good Food not just for recipes, but for the confidence and inspiration to cook better, more creatively, and more joyfully every day.





Section 6

Deep Dive: TV & Radio

80%

of TV viewers regularly talk to others about what they are watching – associated with greater wellbeing and lower mental health difficulties

1 in 3

TV and radio respondents cited 'giving me something to talk about' as a top impact of their viewing or listening

Television and radio occupy a different place in the joy landscape to gardening and cooking. Where hands-on activities generate joy through doing – through competence, achievement, and flow – TV and radio generate joy through connection: to stories, to knowledge, to culture, and to each other.

They're the activities through which people make sense of the world, find comfort in difficult moments, and discover the shared cultural references that bring communities together.

Empathy, connection, and the cultural conversation

The research found that TV and radio are deeply appreciated for their role in supporting emotional wellbeing: providing comfort, companionship, and positive emotional distraction. Both activities were strongly associated with participants' sense of being connected to something beyond their immediate lives.

This social dimension of media consumption is one of the most key findings in the research. Over a third of TV and radio respondents cited 'giving me something to talk about' as a top impact of their viewing or listening, reflecting the deep human need for shared cultural reference points.

80% of TV viewers and 77% of radio listeners reported talking at least sometimes to others about their viewing

and listening habits, and this social interaction was directly associated with greater wellbeing and lower mental health difficulties.

The research also captures a genuine sense of loss around what participants called the 'water cooler moment' – the shared experience of watching or hearing the same thing at the same time, and the conversations it generates. The shift to streaming and on-demand has fractured that shared experience, and focus group participants lamented it explicitly.

In an era when the same programme no longer unites an audience at a single moment, the brands that can still create genuine cultural events.

Radio: deep immersion and the hunger for knowledge

73%

of radio listeners cited expanding their knowledge as a key motivation – the dominant driver for the medium

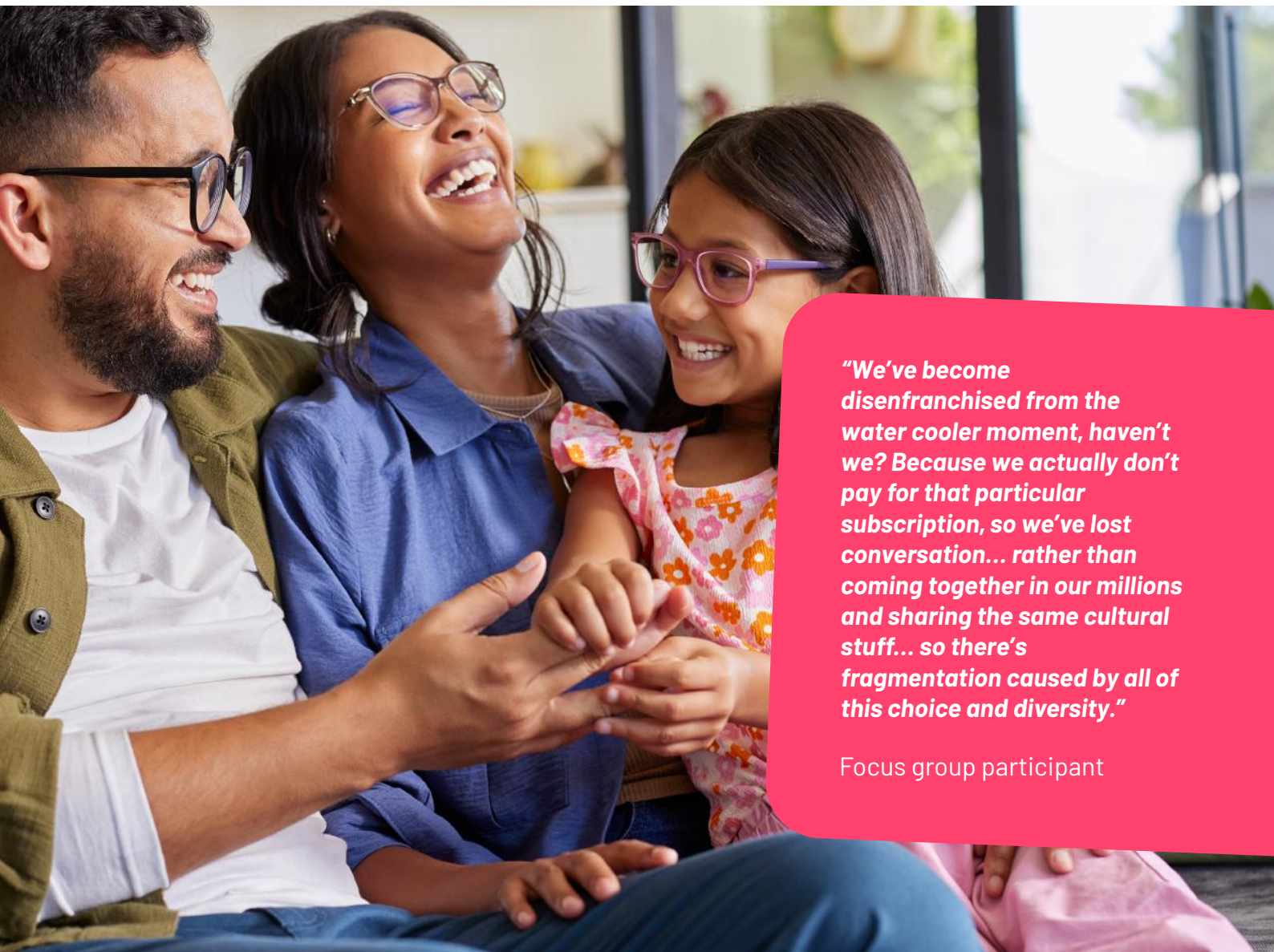
While TV is the more widely consumed medium – 85% of respondents engaged with it – radio produces a distinctly different and deeper psychological experience. Radio listeners reported a higher sense of immersion than TV viewers: the audio experience generates a more active imaginative engagement, drawing listeners further into medium.

45%

said improving their skills and knowledge was the top perceived impact of their radio listening

Knowledge is the dominant driver for radio. 73% of radio listeners cited expanding their knowledge as a key motivation for listening, more than any other single factor. And 45% said improving their skills and knowledge was the top perceived impact of their listening.

Radio listeners are also 16% more likely than average to score highly on openness to experience. They are curious, intellectually engaged, and drawn to new ideas. This is an audience that comes to audio content with genuine appetite, not passive habit.



"We've become disenfranchised from the water cooler moment, haven't we? Because we actually don't pay for that particular subscription, so we've lost conversation... rather than coming together in our millions and sharing the same cultural stuff... so there's fragmentation caused by all of this choice and diversity."

Focus group participant

Engaging with Radio Times

7.1m

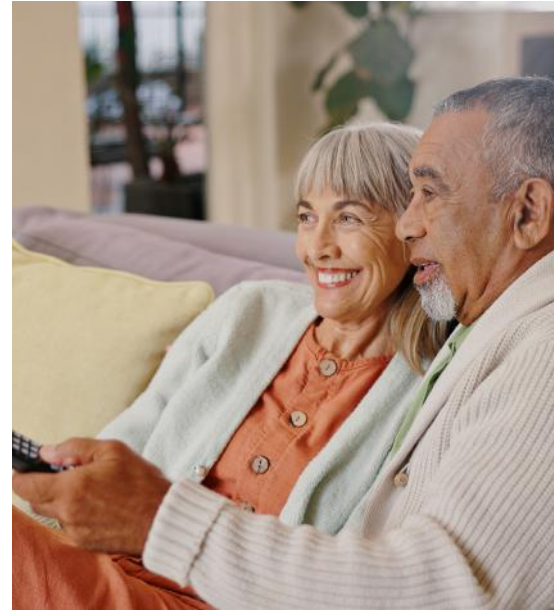
Total monthly UK brand reach for Radio Times – the UK's most trusted TV and radio guide

The dominant emotional responses to Radio Times touchpoints were curiosity (14.9% for TV, 14.4% for radio) and feeling engaged (11.2% and 10.5% respectively) – The most cited perceived impact was becoming more knowledgeable (19% for TV, 14% for radio).

58m

Monthly page impressions on RadioTimes.com – more than three times the size of Digital Spy

In the focus groups, Radio Times was associated with enjoyment, information, and most distinctively – a deep sense of ritual and family tradition around the act of marking up programmes, particularly at Christmas. Participants described the brand as a trusted guide in a world of overwhelming choice, valued for its editorial authority and the confidence it gave them about what was worth watching.



Radio Times sits at the centre of both TV and Radio audiences. With a total monthly UK brand reach of 7.1 million, 341,000 weekly magazine readers, and 58 million monthly page impressions on RadioTimes.com, it is the UK's most authoritative guide to what is worth watching and listening to.

SOURCES

The Joy Test: Preliminary Results – University of Sussex / Immediate Media, August 2025

The Joy Test: Press Releases – Consumer and Trade versions, January 2026

Radio Times: Sales Story / Media Pack 2026 – Immediate Media

PAMCo H1 2025 (Radio Times total brand reach); Ipsos iris Oct–Dec 2025 (RadioTimes.com page impressions); ABC Jan–Dec 2024 (weekly circulation and subscriber data)

PPA Awards 2025 – Best Digital Product or Service: Radio Times App

Dominic Lobley, InPublishing, March 2026 (water cooler moment / streaming fragmentation)



Section 7

Methodology

About the research

The main quantitative survey was designed using Qualtrics software. Participants were recruited via the Immediate Insiders panel – comprising people who engage with Immediate brands – and from the Immediate customer database, which includes magazine subscribers, app users, and website registered users. Survey links were also hosted on [gardenersworld.com](https://www.gardenersworld.com), [bbcgoodfood.com](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com), and [radiotimes.com](https://www.radiotimes.com).

The final dataset comprised 7,508 respondents, 95.4% of whom were based in the UK.

The main survey was supported by a nationally representative survey of 2,182 respondents was provided by CINT

The focus groups

Six focus groups were conducted with a total of 42 participants, recruited from the quantitative survey on the basis of their frequency of brand engagement and reported levels of joy. Groups were structured to include both highly engaged and less engaged brand users across all three leisure activity areas. Focus groups were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, lasting approximately 90 minutes each, and were transcribed and thematically analysed using NVivo.

Lead researcher

The study was led by Professor Robin Banerjee, Professor of Developmental Psychology at the University of Sussex.



Section 8

Case Studies

Joy is amplified when brands show up in the right context, at the right moment, in the right environment.

The following case studies demonstrate what that looks like in practice. These are campaigns built around the passion points that matter most to Immediate's audiences, delivered through trusted editorial environments and live experiences that deliver flow, immersion, and genuine emotional engagement.

They are creative collaborations rooted in deep audience understanding, campaigns that met people in the activities that bring them most joy, and earned their attention as a result.

LEGO x Immediate:
Share What You Love
image

Sky x Netflix x Radio
Times:
Radio Crimes image

Dr. Oetker Ristora
Radio Times:
Meet Me Midweek

LEGO x Immediate: Share What You Love

LEGO faced a familiar challenge for a market-leading brand: staying front of mind not just at Christmas, but as a year-round gifting choice for parents and grandparents navigating an increasingly digital world. The brief called for a partnership that could bring LEGO's of appeal to life across multiple family interests, driving consideration among adults buying for children aged 4-12.

Immediate's response was Share What You Love, a year-long collaboration spanning four passion-led brands: BBC Gardeners' World, BBC Top Gear, MadeForMums, and Radio Times. Each brand played a distinct role, connecting LEGO with the interests families already share, from nature and making to motoring, parenting, and storytelling.

The centrepiece was an immersive walk-through LEGO garden at BBC Gardeners' World Live, created in collaboration with the Young Gardener of the Year, a physical expression of the campaign idea inviting families to explore and build together in a live setting.

Print advertorials featured children's reviews written in their own voices, while a digital content hub offered a passion-led gift generator recommending LEGO sets by age, price, and interest. A six-part video series captured real families building together, generating 15.8 million views with all six films exceeding view-through rate benchmarks.

The experiential element proved particularly powerful. At the live event, 78% of visitors actively engaged with the Creation Station, 80% reported more positive perceptions of LEGO after the experience, and 80% said they were more likely to purchase in future. Industry recognition followed across the likes of Campaign, AOP, and InPublishing, and LEGO committed to continuing the partnership into 2026.

The campaign demonstrated the commercial power of aligning a brand with trusted passion communities and of bringing that alignment to life not just in print and digital, but in real-world shared experiences.

image here

Sky x Netflix x Radio Times: Radio Crimes

The hardest audience to shift is not the undecided, but the satisfied. For Sky and Netflix, the challenge was persuading an audience that already felt well-served by their existing TV setup that the new £15-per-month Sky Essential bundle - including Netflix - offered something meaningfully better. The campaign also needed to support the launch of The Thursday Murder Club film, without feeling like a conventional subscription push.

Radio Times, developed in close collaboration with Publicis and Sky/Netflix, devised a solution that turned the magazine itself into the campaign. Radio Crimes staged the fictional kidnapping of Radio Times editor Shem Law, transforming eight weeks of magazine pages into an unfolding whodunnit. Readers became armchair detectives, piecing together clues across print, digital, and social, while the Sky/Netflix crime drama offering was woven naturally into the editorial environment throughout.

The execution was developed at speed: the first eight-page instalment moved from greenlight to press in under two weeks to align with The Thursday Murder Club release. Deputy Editor, Alexia Skinitis, stepped into the storyline in Shem's absence, taking over editor's letters and subscriber emails to extend the narrative across all Radio Times touchpoints. A dedicated digital crime hub and social competition further deepened participation.

The results were exceptional. The campaign reached 11 million people, with the digital hub achieving 146% of its page view target and the social competition delivering 244% over its KPI. Native advertorial CTRs ran at five times the standard benchmark, and post-campaign research showed 61% print recall against a 42% benchmark. Awareness of the Sky x Netflix bundle rose by 33%, agreement that it offers content worth paying for increased by 30%, and 43% of respondents recognised the value of having both services in a single subscription.

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Dr. Oetker Ristorante x Radio Times: Meet Me Midweek

Pizza is a weekend food. That was the perception Dr. Oetker Ristorante needed to change. Its Thin and Crispy range offered a lighter, more refined option suited to quieter midweek moments, but shifting deeply ingrained consumer habits in a crowded market required more than a product message. Working with agency partner Wavemaker, Ristorante set out to own the midweek occasion entirely.

Immediate identified the target audience - ABC1 women aged 45 to 65 - as a natural Radio Times readership: quality-conscious, trust-driven, and drawn to familiar entertainment as a way to unwind during the week. The insight was simple but precise: for this audience, midweek evenings are built around small pleasures, and Ristorante needed to become one of them.

The solution was the Radio Times Book Club, sponsored by Ristorante, the first-ever commercial sponsorship of the magazine's editorial feature. To give the partnership an authentic human face, Immediate secured Joanna Page (Stacey from Gavin and Stacey) to lead the campaign, filming her in the Good Food kitchen pairing Ristorante pizzas with Book Club titles, each pizza flavour matched playfully to a book genre.

The campaign ran across print, digital, social, and a live reader event where fans met Joanna and the Radio Times editorial team - a community moment that generated strong PR coverage alongside the commercial results.

The numbers were strong across the board: total reach exceeded 6 million, video views topped 3 million, and the campaign drove a 20-fold increase in associating the RT Book Club with Ristorante. Brand metrics shifted significantly, with 27% viewing Ristorante more favourably, 28% more likely to recommend it, and 33% considering it better quality than competitor brands. Perhaps most tellingly, 21% of those who saw the campaign had bought or intended to buy Ristorante as a direct result.

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