

## “Don’t Shoot the Brain Messenger”

Category – Stress and Happiness

Does happiness make a difference in individuals and their performance levels? Would grades go up if every child was wearing a smile? Would workplaces be more successful if everyone was enjoying themselves? Would individuals be healthier if they were happy more often?

According to Teresa Amabile, a Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School & Director of Research, happy people are more productive and there are 5 key reasons why.

- Happy people are more creative
- Happy people have more energy
- Happy people are more optimistic
- Happy people work better with others
- Happy people fix problems instead of complaining about them

No doubt you’ve experienced the power of happiness in your own life. Likely you felt stronger, more confident, creative and capable – with a positive attitude like that, no doubt your results were proof as well.

With the positive effect happiness has on us, you would think more people would intentionally be happy. The question is how do we achieve and sustain a happy state of being?

Realistically, happiness is not something we need to work hard to attain! It exists in the present moment, when we are doing things we enjoy with ample time to really experience and take them in. Whether it's doing a favourite hobby or sport, spending time in nature or sharing a meal with friends or family, happiness is always available, in our simple daily acts, when we listen, breathe, and savour it.

Having the mental, physical and emotional space to experience happiness is not easy or natural for most people though, especially with the fast pace, imbalanced society we live in.

Perhaps understanding how happiness works in the Brain, will give us more clues as to how we may play an active role in creating it...

Research and modern day tools have enabled scientists to penetrate the interior of single nerve cells in the brain and important discoveries have been made about the inner workings of our neurological world. For example, vital chemicals carry messages between brain cells. In essence, they allow brain cells to "talk to" one another.

On a typical day in the brain, trillions of messages are sent and received. The messages that are happy and upbeat are carried by the brain's "HAPPY MESSENGERS" (technically known as Biogenic Amine/Endorphin System). While messages that are somber and quieting are carried by the brain's "SAD MESSENGERS". Most nerve centers receive input from both types of messengers. ***As long as this input is in balance, everything runs well.***

Stress, however, causes problems with the brain's Happy Messengers. When life is smooth, the Happy Messages are more bountiful. But when too much stress is placed on the brain, the Happy Messengers begin to fall behind on their deliveries. As the stress continues, the happy messages begin to decrease. Important nerve centers then receive mostly SAD MESSAGES, and the brain becomes depressed. The person enters a state of brain chemical imbalance.

### ***What can we do to bring back those Happy Brain Messages?***

Author of the bestselling book, "What Happy People Know", Dr. Dan Baker has devoted his life to teaching people how to be happy. He says that research has shown that the root of unhappiness lies in the oldest, reptilian part of our brains, and negative reactions are often dictated by primal instincts. We're literally "hardwired for hard times".

Personally, when I'm feeling stressed or out of balance, I feel like a cave person! I am more prone to thinking and saying things that are negative, hurtful, and limiting. In those instances it is important that I make an attitudinal and perspective shift so I can reconnect with my creativity, productivity and enjoyment. The best solution I've found to counteract these limited ways and create new connections, is using movement.

By using Cognitive Fitness movements, people of all ages can recover balance and shift from the stress part of their brain into midbrain (left-right brain) balance. As greater neuro network connection ensues, a person will then proceed into connection with their frontal lobes. When we access our frontal lobes we are using our whole brain connection and can see more options available to us in any situation. Not only does the cup become half full, we are ready to make a toast to new levels of happiness and confidence!

With a New Year upon us, why wait any longer to experience and benefit from those happy vibes, at work, in the classroom and in daily life living? Truly, if you want to live the life you've always dreamed of, then what better action then to align yourself with than that "happy feel good place"? Happiness is literally at your fingertips!

*"Plenty of people miss their share of happiness not because they never found it, but because they didn't stop to enjoy it". William Feather*

Come learn about our Cognitive Fitness training or call us to learn more about Keynotes and Implementation Coaching for your workplace or school's productivity and success. Find out how you can move from stress to balance and benefit from your whole brain connection and feel happier too!!

Jill Hewlett and Sharon Todd are co-founders of Brain Works Global Inc., licensed Brain Gym® Trainers and Cognitive Fitness Experts. Their company trains clients on how to maximize their learning potential while working in conjunction with their individual goals.

For over a decade [Jill Hewlett](#) has been providing inspirational and educational [keynotes](#). As well, Brain Works Global provides [in house](#) and [community training](#) and personal and professional coaching services to a wide range of [organizations](#), [schools](#) and the [community](#).

For more information go to <http://www.brainworksglobal.com> or call Sharon Todd, Director of Sales and Operations 905.235.5546.



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