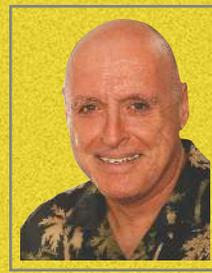


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1067 Is it Just Seniors Who Produce the Love Hormone?

I think it's generally considered true that seniors are kinder than younger generations. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I probably won't get a lot of arguments on that point...but did you know that the likely reason for their over-abundance of kindness was thanks to the "love hormone"? We'll dig in and see what this means, next, on The Extra Point.

Scientists report that it's a brain chemical that makes many of our older folks as nice as they are. A brain chemical?

In a study conducted by Dr. Paul J. Zak of Claremont Graduate University in California, people who release more of the neurochemical oxytocin are kinder to others and tend to be more satisfied with their lives.

The research shows that as people age, the amount of oxytocin released in the brain increases and they are more caring.

Experts say these findings are consistent with many religious philosophies, where we feel better about our life through helping others.

Oxytocin is known for its role in social attachment, interpersonal trust, and generosity. As mentioned, it also carries the label, "love hormone."

Zak stated, "Participants in our study who released the most oxytocin were more generous to charity when given the opportunity, and performed many other helping behaviors. The change in oxytocin was also positively related to participants' empathy, religious participation, and gratitude."

So, is it just about age or could younger people somehow be conditioned to release more oxytocin, therefore enjoying life more?

Researchers organized another study, over 100 people between the ages of 18 and 99.

Participants were each shown a video about a little boy with cancer which previous work had confirmed did induce oxytocin release in the brain. Blood was taken before and after the video to measure the change in oxytocin.

Zak said participants were given the option to donate some of their earnings from the study to a childhood cancer charity, and this was used to measure their immediate prosocial behavior.

The results? People who released the most oxytocin in the experiment were not only more generous for the charity, but also performed many other helping behaviors — and it wasn't just seniors.

So, yes, younger people can engineer a life with greater satisfaction, by choosing activities that offer a benefit to others. We can do this individually, or perhaps as a group in the workplace.

Somebody will ask, is oxytocin available as a drug? Yes, in injectable form to assist women with labor and nursing babies. There are also sprays which are sold without a prescription needed, and come with various claims and suggested benefits, etc.

I like the hormone concept, that oxytocin is released in the course of doing good for folks who need it. It's great for teambuilding, too, if you do it with coworkers.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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