

PDF companion to the audiobook

14 Days to Sustainable Happiness

a workbook for every brain

by Loretta Breuning, PhD

Inner Mammal Institute

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Day 1

YOUR POWER OVER YOUR BRAIN

Today you will learn:

- **why everyone has ups and downs**
- **how we produce our feelings**
- **how to find your power over your emotions**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

These exercises help you find your power over your happy brain chemicals.

- **Notice strong feelings you have about things relevant to the survival of your genes: your appearance, your relatives, and your social alliances.**

- **Notice how you get excited about something new, and stop getting excited about what you already have.**

- **Find a match between a good experience in your past and something that makes you happy today. What matters is the overall pattern, not the surface details.**

Day 2

THE JOY OF DOPAMINE

Today you will learn:

- **what turns on the joy of dopamine**
- **why we don't have it all the time**
- **how it's wired from past experience**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

The quest for dopamine is a huge motivator in daily life. These exercises help you notice the power of dopamine in the world around you.

- **Notice the excitement you feel when you see a new way to meet a need. When does that good feeling stop?**

- **Notice other people getting excited about an expected reward and taking steps toward it.**

- **Find examples of people seeking an instant reward to relieve a bad feeling.**

Day 3

THE SAFETY OF OXYTOCIN

Today you will learn:

- to notice the feeling that it's safe to lower your guard
- the way oxytocin makes you feel good when you find social support
- why oxytocin doesn't flow all the time

MAKE IT HAPPEN

The urge for oxytocin is a huge motivator in our lives. These exercises help you recognize the quest for oxytocin all around you.

- Notice things people do in order to belong to a group and avoid feeling isolated.

○ Identify the “common enemy” that unites different groups of people that you know.

○ Notice how people seek protection and support from others, and what they offer in exchange.

Day 4

THE PRIDE OF SEROTONIN

Today you will learn:

- **how social recognition triggers serotonin**
- **why animals care about social importance**
- **why it's never enough**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to understand the serotonin impulse in the world around you.

- **Notice things people do to feel strong or important in the eyes of others.**

- **Notice how often people compare themselves to others, and how they differ in their basis of comparison.**

- **Notice the way people fear losing their source of strength or pride.**

Day 5

THE CHALLENGE OF ENDORPHIN

Today you will learn:

- why pain triggers endorphin
- why we're not meant to seek endorphin
- a safe way to stimulate it

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to understand the urge for endorphin in yourself and others.

- **Think of a time when you injured yourself but didn't feel it for a while. Ask others if they've noticed this.**

- **Think of ways that people inflict pain on themselves to get endorphin. Find the habit loop in their thoughts and actions.**

- **List ways that you can add laughter to your life.**

Day 6

THE PAIN OF CORTISOL

Today you will learn:

- **how cortisol makes you feel like your survival is threatened**
- **why we have false alarms**
- **why we love whatever relieves cortisol**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to understand the power of cortisol in your daily life.

- **Notice someone feeling bad and figure out what pain they are anticipating.**

- **When you feel bad, notice how your verbal brain tries to explain and relieve it.**

- **When you feel bad, notice the way you look for evidence of threat, and perhaps trigger more threatened feelings.**

Day 7

YOUR DOPAMINE PAST

Today you will:

- **discover your old dopamine pathways**
- **recognize the habits you have for stimulating dopamine**
- **identify the early experience that built your old dopamine pathways**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to recognize the power of your old dopamine pathways.

- **Notice when you feel excited about something. What reward in your past fit the same basic pattern?**

- **Think about an activity that you like. Notice the way you feel the moment you start planning to do it.**

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- **Think about things that made you happy as a child. What are you doing today that fits the same basic pattern?**

Day 8

YOUR OXYTOCIN PAST

Today, you will:

- notice patterns in your oxytocin-seeking efforts
- identify the early experience that built your oxytocin pathways
- recognize your urge to repeat behaviors that stimulated oxytocin in your past

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to recognize the power of your old oxytocin pathways.

- Notice a moment when you feel accepted or supported. What experience in your past fits the same basic pattern?

- Notice something you do because it helps you get support or acceptance. What similar behaviors can you remember in your early life?

- **Notice a moment when you fear being rejected, isolated or ignored. Look for early experiences that fit the same basic pattern.**

Day 9

YOUR SEROTONIN PAST

Today, you will:

- identify the recognition you got in your early years
- notice how you seek social importance today, and find past patterns that fit
- notice your urge to repeat behaviors that made you special in your past

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to understand your old serotonin pathways.

- Notice a moment when you feel important or special. What experience in your past fit the same basic pattern?

- Notice a moment when you feel one-down. What do you do to feel better? How did you do the same basic thing in your past?

- **Think of a moment of glory in your youth. How do your motivations today fit that general pattern?**

Day 10

YOUR CORTISOL PAST

Today, you will:

- **notice when you get upset and find the same basic patterns in your early experience**
- **identify cortisol moments of your past and notice your urgent fear of such things today**
- **observe things you do to relieve cortisol and how you did those things in your youth**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to understand the power of your old cortisol pathways.

- **Think of three bad moments in your youth. Now look at your present pain and see how the patterns overlap.**

- **What did you do to relieve a bad feeling when you were young? What did those around you do? How do you feel about those behaviors and thought patterns today?**

- **Think of something you hate and urgently want to avoid. Can you find the early experience that matches this impulse?**

Day 11

YOUR DOPAMINE FUTURE

Today, you will:

- **explore new paths to dopamine**
- **design a new dopamine habit that you'd like to have**
- **build a new dopamine habit by making a plan to repeat a new thought or action**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to design your new dopamine pathways.

- **Think of a short-run goal, a long-run goal, and a middle-term goal.**

- **Think of something that frustrates you, and design realistic steps to fix it. Be sure to focus on your own life rather than global abstractions.**

- **List seeking activities that you enjoy. The next time you feel bad, spend 20-40 minutes on one of these activities.**

Day 12

YOUR OXYTOCIN FUTURE

Today you will learn to:

- repeat small steps toward social trust
- repair broken trust to relieve cortisol
- build positive expectations about social support

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to design your new oxytocin pathways.

- **Think of a small way to build trust with someone, and do it before lunch. Do not buy them something! Do not expect an immediate reward. Just notice your own good feelings.**

- **Commit to making one small act of trust each day for 45 days. Give trust and receive trust on alternate days. You can give trust by being helpful or having a positive expectation about a person. You can receive trust by acting trustworthy, to help them build a positive expectation of you.**

- **Plan an event that offers trust-building opportunities. Notice your feelings as you plan– both the fear of disappointment and the excitement of approaching a reward.**

Day 13

YOUR SEROTONIN FUTURE

Today you will learn how to:

- create healthy one-up feelings
- manage one-down feelings
- accept the one-up urge in everyone

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to design your new serotonin pathways.

- Think of a step you can take that you're proud of and take it today. Then plan the next step.

- Generate a list of steps that you're proud of. When you feel one-down, look at your list and take one of these steps.

- **Make a plan to repeat a step you're proud of every day. Use healthy treats to build positive associations until it feels natural.**

Day 14

DESIGN YOUR SUSTAINABLE PATH

Today you will learn how to:

- blaze a new trail in your brain
- choose the trail that's right for you
- keep going until it flows

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Complete these exercises to design your new pathway.

- What new happy habit will you commit to building? Think of a small one to start with, and then tackle something important.

- List some sustainable ways to reward yourself for taking a new step.

MORE BOOKS BY

Loretta Graziano Breuning, PhD

Habits of a Happy Brain

Retrain Your Brain to Boost Your Serotonin, Dopamine, Oxytocin and Endorphin Levels

Status Games

Why We Play and How to Stop

Tame Your Anxiety

Rewiring Your Brain for Happiness

The Science of Positivity

Stop Negative Thought Patterns by Changing Your Brain Chemistry

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Loretta Graziano Breuning, PhD, is founder of the Inner Mammal Institute and Professor Emerita of Management at California State University, East Bay. She is the author of many personal development books, including *Habits of a Happy Brain: Retrain Your Brain to Boost Your Serotonin, Dopamine, Oxytocin and Endorphin Levels*.

As a teacher and a parent, she was not convinced by prevailing theories of human motivation. Then she learned about the brain chemistry we share with earlier mammals, and everything made sense. She began creating resources that have helped thousands of people make peace with their inner mammal. Her work has been translated into many languages and is cited on major media.

Dr. Breuning is a graduate of Cornell University and Tufts, and a grandparent of two. Before teaching, she worked for the United Nations in Africa.

The Inner Mammal Institute offers videos, books, podcasts, blogs, multimedia, and a training program, to help you make peace with your inner mammal. You can follow Dr. Breuning's work on most social media, YouTube, and PsychologyToday.com. Her podcast is "The Happy Brain."

Introduce your friends to their inner mammal with the free five-day happy chemical jumpstart at: InnerMammalInstitute.org.