

## Biological cause of social rivalry explained and relieved in new book

### Status Games: Why We Play and How to Stop

by Loretta Breuning – Sept 8 release by Rowman Littlefield

Why do we compare ourselves to others?

Because we've inherited the brain of mammals who did that.

In the animal world, a position of weakness is a survival threat. The mammal brain is always comparing to protect itself. When you see yourself in a position of weakness, your inner mammal reacts with cortisol. When you see yourself in a position of strength, your mammal brain rewards you with serotonin. We play status games because serotonin makes it feel good!

The point is not that you *should* care about status; the point is that you do, and you repeat behaviors that stimulated serotonin in your past. Breuning's new book shows you how to escape this loop while enjoying the serotonin we naturally crave.

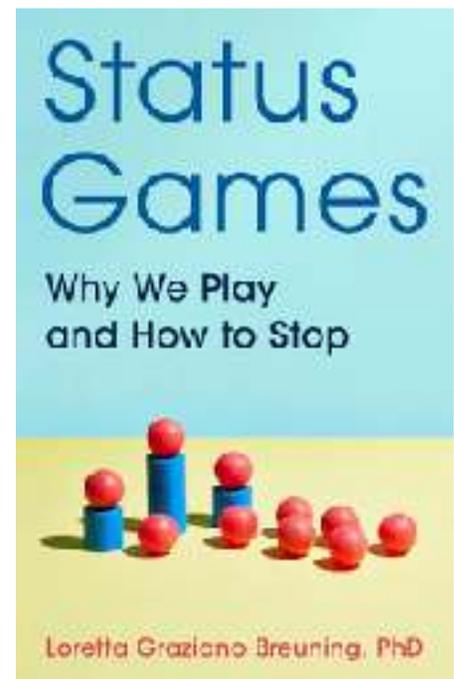
**Status Games: Why We Play and How to Stop** shows how:

- animals play status games in a wide range of species
- humans have played status games since the dawn of time
- your brain creates status games without conscious intent

The book explains how our serotonin circuits are built in adolescence when neuroplasticity peaks. You'll discover your own serotonin circuits, and how to rewire them. You'll learn to put yourself up without putting others down. Your inner mammal will stop seeing status games as survival threats, so you can finally relax.

It's not easy being a big-brained mammal! But you can train your mammal brain to work together with your human brain like a horse and rider, and enjoy the confidence of serotonin without the drudgery of "junk status."

Loretta Graziano Breuning, PhD is founder of the Inner Mammal Institute and Professor Emerita of Management at California State University, East Bay. Her many prior books on mammalian brain chemistry have been translated into ten languages and cited in major media. She has helped thousands of enthusiastic fans to make peace with their inner mammal. Details at [InnerMammalInstitute.org](http://InnerMammalInstitute.org)



## Interview Questions

1. Why do people care about status despite their best intentions?
2. Why is serotonin stimulated by one-up moments?
3. How do we know that animals care about status?
4. Why doesn't our verbal brain know what our animal brain is doing?
5. Isn't it society's fault? Genes? Men?
6. Is a certain type of person more prone to status games?
7. Why would we put ourselves down when we long to feel one-up?
8. How can we stop playing status games?
9. What if others keep playing?
10. Why haven't we heard this before?

## Quotable Quotes from Status Games

- Talking about your sex life is more socially acceptable than admitting that you care about your status.
- The appetite for social dominance is more primal than the appetite for food and sex because it always comes first.
- We have more words for the one-up impulse than Eskimos have for snow... We use words with positive connotations for ourselves and those we like, and words with negative connotations for those we don't like.
- Our goal is not to justify crass competitiveness. Our goal is to explain the gnawing sense of being dominated and transform it into confidence and pride.
- The disease model creates the illusion that others get serotonin all the time. It seems like "big shots" get it easily... but there is no royal road to serotonin.
- Moral superiority gives you the one-up position, so it feels good. It's hard to get the one-up position in other ways, so moral superiority is highly attractive.
- I thought the way to be happy was to move to Lake Wobegon. But when I got there, I realized that people are all the same. We all fret over social comparison because we've all inherited a limbic brain that does that. Fortunately, we have power over these emotions when we know how we create them.
- Ancient gift-giving rituals are curiously similar to the grooming behavior of monkeys.