



What to do TODAY Grade 1 (🧠 Emotional Health Story)

This story introduces children to the reward pathway, the place in your brain that makes you feel happy.

- The main job your brain has is to keep you alive.
- When you do something that you need to do to stay alive, like eating food, you “feel” happy. This makes sure you do that behavior again.
- Whenever you feel happy, your reward system is working, so listen to your brain...it wants you to be happy.

🧠 For today's story, you need to have the Story Video ready and you also need to have the “**What Makes You Happy?**” video downloaded from YouTube – <https://youtu.be/1Y5R8K7OKSo> .

🧠 Play the Intro and stop after the following slide. Reiterate the info.



So, today's story is about Emotional Health and being happy is an emotion that we feel.

The title of the story is “Our Brain Wants You to be Happy” – hmmm... I wonder WHY our brain wants us to be happy.

🧠 Continue playing the video and stop after the following slide.



Ok...so there are lots of things - or lots of behaviors - that our brain helps us to do.

What ARE some of the behaviors that our brain helps us to do? Discuss this with the students.

Lots of these behaviors are important to help keep us healthy and alive, so when we do these behaviors our brain makes us feel happy.

Let's see how that works.

🎨 Continue playing the Story Video and stop at the end of the next slide.

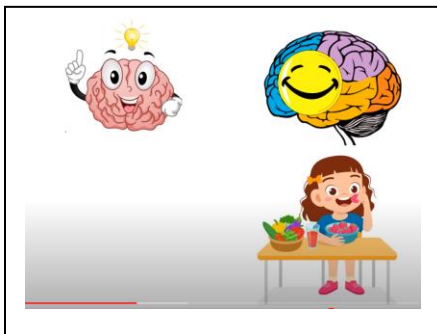


So, your happy place turns on when you are doing something that helps to keep your body healthy and alive.

Ask the students...And, what are some of the behaviors that you do to keep your body healthy and alive? (Eat, sleep, drink water, etc.) Discuss these answers – reminding them that their bodies need food for energy, sleep to rest and repair their body, and water (or fluids) to keep their body hydrated (so it does not dry up).

Ok...let's see WHY your brain turns on your happy place when you do behaviors, like eating, that help to keep you healthy and alive.

🎨 Continue playing the video and stop after the following slide. Reiterate the info.



So, when you are hungry, your brain helps you to do the behaviors you need to do to get the food and eat the food. When you eat food when you are hungry, your brain turns on your happy place and you feel happy.

Raise your hand if you feel happy after you eat food when you are hungry. (Be sure to raise your hand too!) Yes, when we are hungry eating food makes us happy.

Ask the students...And do we “feel” happy with our hands? Of course not, we feel happy with our brain – because the “happy place” in our brain gets turned on.

🎨 Continue playing the video and stop at the end of the following slide.



Well, that is kind of cool!!! Your brain turns OFF your happy place once you get what your body needed to stay healthy – which was FOOD.

In fact, what happens to you if you eat food when you are NOT hungry???

Let's see, let's say that you are hungry and you eat – how do you feel? Raise your hand if you feel happy – ok...looks like most of you feel happy when you eat when you are hungry.

🎨 Next, ask the the students... What happens when you keep doing a behavior when your body does NOT need anything – so, not hungry, tired or thirsty? Discuss the following.

Now, let's say the you are hungry, you eat food, and you get happy because your body and your brain needed food for energy. Now, you are not really hungry anymore - BUT, you just keep eating. WHY???

You may be eating something really yummy and you just want to keep tasting that yummy food – so you keep eating. You kind of feel happy, because you like the taste of the food, BUT...your tummy is getting REALLY full.

In fact, now you may not feel happy anymore. Your brain knows that you are not hungry, so you should not be eating and it turned off your happy place. AND, you are starting to feel sick – like you want to throw up.

Ask the students the following questions and discuss this with them.

Have any of you ever done this before? What were you eating?

At the end of the discussion, tell the students that we need to listen to our brains and when we are not hungry anymore, we should not just keep eating.

🎨 Continue playing the video and stop after the following slide.



So, our brain turns on our happy place when our body needs something – like food – to make us healthy.

But, there are LOTS of things that make us happy – and remember, when we feel happy that means our happy place it turned on.

When our body gets what it needs, then the brain turns off our happy place – because your body and your brain have to do lots of other things too. Let's see what other kinds of things make us happy.

🎨 Next, prepare to show the YouTube video “**What Makes You Happy?**”. Tell the students you are going to play a video to see what kinds of things make kids happy.

During the video, you can make comments like – that makes me happy too, or that does NOT make me happy, or act surprised if it is a surprising response, etc.

After the video is done (about 4 minutes) – or if the students look like they are not interested – then say...OK, we saw what makes some children happy – but, what about you? **What makes YOU happy?**

Discuss this with the students.

- When a student answers, ask the other students to raise their hands if that makes them happy too.
- If a student gives a surprising answer, ask them WHY that makes them happy.

🎨 At the end of the presentation, reiterate the main points of the story that you have discussed so far.

So, today we learned about Emotional Health and about what happens when we are happy – it means that the brain has turned on our happy place.

- The main job your brain has is to keep you alive – so your brain wants you to do behaviors that help to keep you alive.
- When you do something that you need to do to stay alive, like eating food, you “feel” happy. This makes sure you do that behavior again.
- Whenever you feel happy, your reward system is working, so listen to your brain...it wants you to be happy.

Tell the students that you had fun talking with them today and ask them if they had fun learning.

Be sure to thank them for listening and the Brain Health Team of JHU students will see them soon.