



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.

- 🧠 Remind the students that last time they learned how being happy is an emotion that turns on a special place in their brains – their happy place.

Put on the video with the following slide. Talk to the students about other emotions prior to playing the video.



Got through the emotions, asking the students if they have ever felt these other emotions. (Just have them raise their hands – if they have felt them.)

After each, ask the students...What made you feel this emotion? (Be sure to comment, telling the students that you might feel the same way.)

Reiterate that there are LOTS of other emotions. Let's see how our emotions can help to make our body and our brain healthy.

- 🧠 Play the Story Video. At the end of the following slide, talk about how being scared can help your body and your brain.



Reiterate that being scared can help us when we are crossing the street to do it safely – that protects our body and our brain from getting smushed by a car.

Let's think about other things that scare us – how would being afraid help your body and your brain? After each discuss ways that being afraid could help them.

(Ex. Big dogs – ask before petting them, a tall slide – careful so you don't fall, thunder – means a storm is coming and you need to go inside, bees – learn that you don't touch them – they sting, etc.)

- Continue playing the video and stop the video after, “there are plenty of reasons why playing a video game makes you happy”.



First, who plays video games – raise your hands. (Usually it is a lot of students – so comment.)

Then say...raise your hands if playing video games makes you happy.

Then ask...can you eat a video game? Can you drink a video game? NO, of course not. So, your body does not NEED the video game – so why does your happy place turn on? Let’s see.

- Continue playing the Story Video and stop at the end of the next slide. Discuss “too much of anything is not good”. You still need about 5 minutes to finish the presentation –so, watch your time.



So, doing too much of ANYTHING is not good for your body and your brain. Why is that???

Let’s discuss how too much of anything could actually hurt us. Start with food, water, exercise and sleep, and if time permits do more examples.

Behavior or Activity	Possible Harmful Effects
exercise	Damage to joints, tendons, bones, ligaments, heart
sleep	Can lead to chronic illness, obesity
medicine	Counteract each other, potency, harm organs
handwashing	Skin damage leads to place for germs to thrive
Food (same food over and over)	Sick, overweight, unhealthy, variety/nutrients
water	Kidneys cannot get rid of fluids fast enough, drops sodium levels in blood to unhealthy levels, nausea, weakness, fatigue, headaches
work	No time for other people/things, stress
screen time	Eyesight, not moving, not interacting with others
video games	Eyesight, not moving, not interacting with others, expensive
homework	No time for other activities, stress/frustration, fatigue
chores	No time for other activities, stress/frustration, fatigue
reading	No time for other activities, not moving, not interacting with others
sports	Injuries from overuse of body, injuries from repetitive movement, collisions, expensive
information	Overloaded with information, what is true and what is not, misinformation
money	Spend frivolously, people take advantage of you, do not appreciate things you have
freedom	No boundaries, can be unsafe or dangerous, irresponsible
choice	Hard to make a decision, indecisive, second guess decisions
toys/stuff	Lose track off things, do not appreciate what you have, forget what you have, do not use/play with, takes up too much space, expensive
friends	Cannot do things with everyone, people get their feelings hurt, not as close with each other, quality or quantity?
pets	Cannot care for and feed all of them, take up too much space, cannot give enough attention to all of them, expensive

- Continue playing the video and, if time permits, stop after the question, “What are some of the things that you like to do with other people?”.



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.

Ask the students, “What are some of the things that you like to do with other people – that turns on your happy place?”. Discuss the answers.

- Continue playing the video until the end of the presentation, reiterate the main points of the story.

So, just like the title says – Your brain DOES want you to be happy!!! That is why you have the emotion of happiness that turns on your happy place.

BUT, your brain does NOT want you to do only ONE thing, which is why your brain turns off your happy place when you get what your body needs. Sometimes that is food, water, or sleep. But, sometimes that is relieving your stress, or being with other people, or even doing your homework. These are ALL things that also help your brain and your body to be healthy.

Emotional health means that we understand our emotions and that we realize that ALL of our emotions help our brain to be healthy.

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.