



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 (18 minutes) and 2 YouTube videos downloaded and cued up for viewing. The “**Happy**” video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sj0DF0rRF18> is about 3 minutes and will be used for your Happy Dance Party. . The “**What Makes You Happy?**” – <https://youtu.be/1Y5R8K7OKSo> is about 4 minutes of children saying what makes them happy. There are also LOTS of questions to engage the students.

- 🧠 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.

But, you do NOT feel happy with your hands – you use your BRAIN.

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 YOUR brain helps YOU 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.

🌈 Ask the students, who likes music? Ask the students who likes to dance? Then ask the students, does music and dancing make you happy? Put on the “Happy” video and then say, Let’s get HAPPY!...

- Have the students stand up and push in their chairs. Tell the students you are going to have a DANCE PARTY!!!
- Start the video and DANCE!!! Be sure to dance crazy, so that the students will be less inhibited about dancing. The students can also follow the moves the dancer on the video.
- At the end of the video – discuss the following...

Suggested Probing Questions:

- Did they enjoy dancing? Why or why not?
- How did they feel while doing it? Why?
- Would they like to do it again? Why or why not?
- Were you smiling, laughing, happy, embarrassed, shy, reserved? All of these are okay!! (Talk about anything you observed while they were dancing.)

Tell the students that their brain wants them to be happy. One thing that makes their brain happy is when their body is physically moving, like dancing. They were feeling happy because they were doing something that was good for their brain and their brain was rewarding them.

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



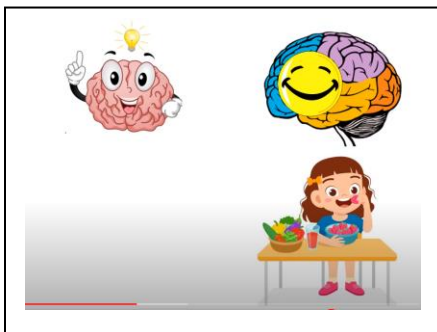
So, your Happy Place turns on when you do something that helps to help keep your body healthy and alive.

Keeping your body healthy and alive – makes you feel happy!

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.

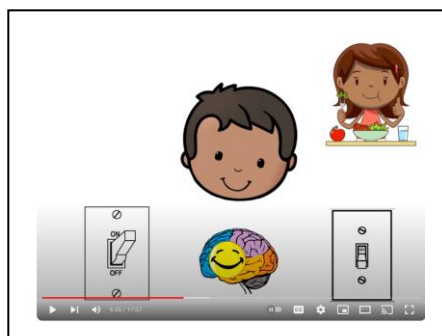
In fact, now you may not feel happy anymore. Your brain knows that you are not hungry, so you should not be eating and it turned off your happy place. AND, you are starting to feel sick – like you want to throw up.

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. (There is about 11 minutes of the video left – with lots more discussion. You can stop the video at any time.

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.

- 🎮 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 smooshed 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, 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. (The list of examples is at the end of the WTDT.)

- 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.

Too much of anything is not good...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