

LOVE!

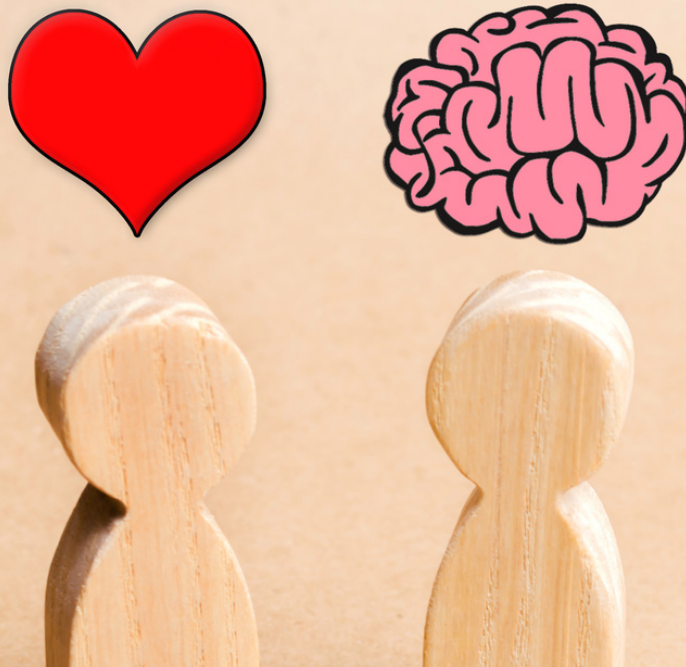
What's Feeding the Brain Got To Do With It???

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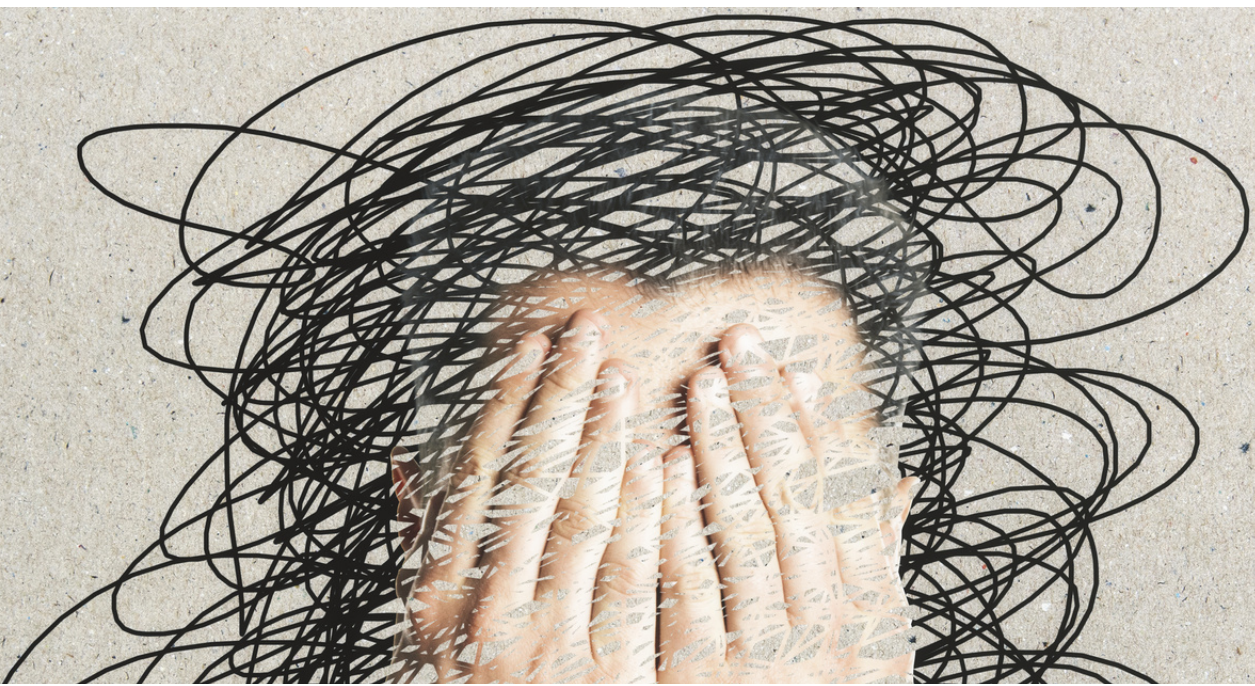
ACADEMY
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Yes, I know! Referencing the brain in an article about how to find and keep the love of your life seems a bit abstract, but let me put this into context for you. Our brains are our master control panel. Everything we think, do and feel is mediated through our brain. Our love hormones, oxytocin and the endorphins, along with testosterone, estrogen and progesterone are mediated by the brain. And just as importantly, our ability to fully show up, either in a dating relationship or with our longer-term partner, with confidence, vitality and presence, depends upon certain brain chemicals being in balance and robustly active. Conversely, our ability to be resilient, to hold out for the "right one" and to recover from the grief of breaking up, or even from the death of a loved one in time, requires a well-fed and balanced brain to support the production and activity of these same chemicals.

Lots of things can throw our brains out of balance, leaving us stressed, anxious, vulnerable and in pain. These include illness, stress and loss, as well as, most importantly, poor nutrition. You see, it's our brain's job to allow us to cope with stress gracefully, but to do that, it needs to be fed optimally. The brain actually requires specific nutrients from the food we eat to make its all-important mood-mediating brain chemicals, which are called neurotransmitters. And, these nutrients, along with these neurotransmitters, are used up in great big gobs when we are stressed or in pain. This includes emotional pain! So, unless we are doubling down on nutritious, brain-supporting food, it often ends up being a downward spiral.

The more we use up our crucial brain chemicals and precursor nutrients to cope with stress and emotional pain, the more stress and emotional pain we are likely to feel, thus depleting them even more.



Furthermore, during these times, we often eat more junk food, and engage in less self-care. Our sleep is interrupted and we often don't take the time to eat nutritious food. Junk food actually depletes the very neurotransmitters it fires. So, while these foods give us temporary relief, in the long run may actually increase our distress. Another downward spiral! So, the red wine, chocolate, ice cream, potato chips, etc., which we crave in order to drown our sorrows, actually make us less able to cope in the long run.





But, depleted brain chemicals impact us in other ways as well. They actually impact our ability to find and maintain love, and even friendship! When I talk about mood-mediating neurotransmitters, I am referring to four systems in the brain and body, which are made out of specific amino acids which come from the protein we eat, in the presence of vitamins and minerals which we get from the rest of our diet.

This is why a protein-rich, nutrient-dense diet is so important to our emotional well-being. What's wonderful however, is that these specific amino acids are available in purified form from your local vitamin store or on-line. They are anti-addictive because they rebuild these all-important mood-mediating neurotransmitters rather than further deplete them, and can work within 20 minutes!



You've probably heard of Serotonin and Dopamine, but GABA and the Endorphins play a huge role in our emotional well-being and love life as well. Let me explain.

Dopamine and its relatives are our survival neurotransmitters. They give us to get up and go, joie de vivre, and the drive towards sex, food, and wanting more of a good thing. When the dopamine family is depleted, we simply don't care anymore. We want to give up, crawl into bed, and stay there. We don't have the energy for self-care or to make positive changes in our lives. Accepting invitations to do fun things or to meet new people is too exhausting and even sex loses its appeal.

Fortunately, using the amino acid L-Tyrosine, available over-the-counter, helps most people restore this system, with energizing results felt within 20 MINUTES!!! Fish oil and a high-protein diet help as well.



Raising serotonin levels seems to improve self-esteem, relieve obsessive worry and anxiety, decrease shame and self-attack, and make us more able to go with the flow and forgive others, rather than hold onto grudges.



In studies they've done with both rats and lobsters, the critters with more serotonin rose to the top of the pecking order, and those with the lowest serotonin levels stayed at the bottom. This would correlate with passive rather than assertive behavior. Many people with low serotonin levels have also harmed their relationships by being too controlling, perfectionistic, rigid and irritable. People with low serotonin levels may even have too much social anxiety to go on dates!



While SSRI medication may help with some of these symptoms, the brain actually makes more serotonin out of its amino acid precursors, Tryptophan and 5HTP, both available over-the-counter, often within 20 minutes. This can even help with sleep as it supports melatonin production and reduces the worry which can keep us awake. It is not advisable to take these precursor amino acids if you are on an SSRI medication such as Prozac, unless you have consulted with an expert.

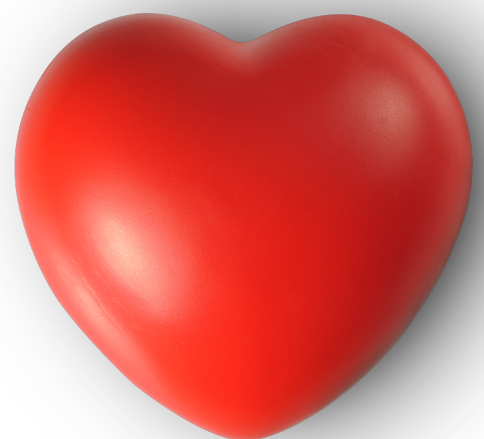
GABA allows us to physically relax, and helps the brain cope with sensory and informational input so that we don't feel overwhelmed by too much to do, bright lights and loud noises. Taking low dose GABA along with 5HTP before a date often allows you to have much less anxiety and more fun. GABA or the related Theanine can help you cope with the stress of a breakup or divorce, as well as helping you sleep better during those times of stress and overwhelm. They might also help you physically relax enough to more deeply enjoy physical intimacy, if that's been an issue.



Finally, the Endorphins help to reduce our experience of both emotional and physical pain. They are what create numbness after an injury, shock or major loss. They are also involved in create the “warm fuzzies” when we feel loved, or when engaging in a “loved” experience. They help us feel more loved, bonded and emotionally connected. A high protein diet helps maintain a healthy endorphin level (women need a minimum of 40-60 grams of protein a day!) but the amino acid D-Phenylalanine, available online, can help to reduce the intensity of emotional or physical pain and help to bring comfort in the face of loneliness and grief. The DLPA form, available over-the-counter from local vitamin stores, help raise dopamine as well, often increasing mood and a sense of “brightness” along with comfort.

For more information or to find a
trained coach, go to

**Certified Recovery
Nutrition Coaches -
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About

The Academy for Addiction & Mental Health Nutrition believes that all addictive disorders, as well as MANY MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES, are driven by nutrient and neurotransmitter imbalances in the brain that can often be successfully addressed without the need for psychotropic medication.

A stable, well-functioning, and well-nourished brain is required for clients to effectively address the emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual issues, which impact their lives and need to be worked through for a successful recovery.

We teach clinicians, treatment providers and health/recovery coaches how to reduce cravings and recurrent use, and improve the quality of recovery by using amino acid and nutrient therapy, along with diet to effectively address many biochemical aspects of addictive and mood/behavioral disorders.



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