

Oxytocin and the Twenty-Second Hug

Is there enough Oxytocin in your blood? If not, you need to hug your spouse/lover/partner a little longer. Yes, that will do it. What am I talking about? Oxytocin, also called the “bonding hormone,” is a very important feel-good hormone in the body. Research indicates that (1) it “inspires the feeling of meaningful connection with others;” (2) it is “also linked to reducing blood pressure and the risk of heart disease.” Some refer to it as the “happy hormone.”

Research has discovered that there is something magical to having long hugs. They have figured out that Oxytocin is released when we hug for at least 20 seconds. A short, quick hug, like those at the church door, will not produce Oxytocin. Perhaps that’s good. We do not want to be bonded to the wrong people. Another lesson is that we need to avoid having long hugs with individuals with whom we are not connected or those with whom we should not be romantically connected.

If you feel your marriage is falling apart or things are not too exciting in your relationship, then hold your partner in a full-body hug and stay there for 20 seconds. Your partner may not be expecting it, so do not hope for anything in return the first or second time. Just keep on doing it. Do not criticize your partner for not responding or if his or her hands are hanging down as you hold on for 20 seconds. Just keep on doing it. You will soon see the difference. Make sure the hugs are full-body or very close. However, do not massage body parts while hugging. Do not do anything to intimidate the partner. Just hold gently and firmly for 20 seconds. If the unsuspecting partner asks: “What are you doing?” just respond by saying: “I just want to hug you a little longer today.” Remember it is 20 seconds. Even if you have to practice before with a doll or timer, do it. Keep on doing it.

PROTECTION:

Oxytocin is released by the pituitary gland especially during orgasm and childbirth and is known to affect our behavior. As stated early, it is also released when hugging for a long time and according the Journal of Neuroscience, by holding hands, and tender touching. A research was done in Germany that made a startling discovery. Oxytocin can protect your marriage. Let me share a quote from the research. “The research team singled out the most attractive female among them to approach their male subjects. Each of the 57 men had been administered either Oxytocin or a placebo via nasal spray prior to the encounter. The attractive researcher would stand about 24 inches away from the subjects, and then move toward and away from them. The men were asked to determine when the attractive researcher was at an “ideal distance” and when she got too close, making them feel “slightly uncomfortable.” The men confirmed after the experiment was completed that the attractive researcher was, in fact, attractive.” Note carefully the results of the research. “Unexpectedly, the men who had received Oxytocin and who were also in monogamous relationships preferred keeping a significantly greater distance between themselves and the temptress researcher -- the hormone promoted bonding with their significant other, not the stranger. They stayed an average of 4 to 6 inches further back than Oxytocin-induced singletons or anyone from the placebo group.”

The research conclusion was: “Oxytocin promotes monogamy by preventing men from “signaling romantic interest” to other women.” What is the lesson? Keep touching and hugging. Make time to walk outdoors while holding hands. Hug daily.

NEW HABITS TO START TODAY

Hugs: Before you leave home in the morning to go to work, make sure you have produced enough Oxytocin in your blood to reduce the risk of you flirting or to keep away from flirtatious persons. Hug for 20 seconds at least once every day, preferably when you first see each other standing on your feet in the morning. This is one habit you do not want to forget. You will have to repeat this twenty-one times before it becomes a habit. That's why you need to find a way of reminding yourself each morning for 21 days. Set an alarm. Ask someone to call you to remind you. Stick a note on the mirror. Whatever, you do, do not stop. After you would have bonded and gotten comfortable, you can even make the hugging fun and creative. Make it a habit.

Compliments: Here is another habit to start today. Each evening, just before winding down to go to sleep, give a positive compliment to your partner. Make the compliment relevant to that day so you will not run out of things to say every day. For example: "That corn bread was delicious honey." "Your blue suit made you look special today." "Your smile this morning turned me on." Make this a daily habit. I can tell you with the touching and the hugging, the Oxytocin should remain high.

Kisses: The final habit I want to share in the article is the ten-second kiss. I have talked about this in previous articles. Research indicates that healthy couples kiss for at least ten seconds every day. This is not the cheek or forehead kiss. This is the deep romantic kissing. Now this will certainly pour out the Oxytocin.

Too many relationships are unexciting not because of arguments but because of insufficient level of Oxytocin in the blood. The persons involved in the relationships are not doing the right things every day to produce that wonderful bonding hormone. Stop the arguments for one week and start hugging, hold hands, compliment and kiss. Husband, your wife is expecting you to reach home today cranky and critical. Surprise her and hug her for 20 seconds. It will make a difference. Hopefully within 21 days your crankiness will go away.

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