

## **Happiness is a Skill We Can Cultivate**

What if happiness wasn't just something that *happens* to us? What if it was something we could *train our brains* to experience more often? Science tells us that happiness isn't just about external circumstances; it's about how we process and absorb the good in our lives. And the great news? We can retrain our brains to experience more joy by intentionally shifting our focus.

Today, in *Super Brain, Happy Life*, we'll explore how our brains are wired, why they tend to focus on the negative, and—most importantly—how we can teach them to notice, absorb, and expand joy. And to start, let's talk about someone who embodies this practice beautifully.

### **Jane Goodall: Training Her Brain for Joy**

Picture a young woman sitting silently in the Tanzanian forest at dawn. The morning mist clings to the trees, and the first rays of sunlight filter through the canopy. This is Jane Goodall, not yet the world-renowned primatologist but an enthusiastic observer practicing what would become her daily ritual of joy. At just 26, Jane arrived in Gombe, Tanzania, with little more than a notebook, binoculars, and uncommon patience. She would sit in complete stillness each morning, absorbing the wonder around her. She later wrote: "*It was a time of magic when each day brought new discoveries.*" Without knowing it, Jane was rewiring her brain for lasting happiness. Every moment she spent seeing a chimp using tools, witnessing the playful bond between a mother and her infant, or simply soaking in the forest symphony, she was strengthening her brain's ability to look for and savor the good. Her ability to cultivate wonder sustained her through skepticism, personal challenges, and environmental devastation. Even at 90, she radiates joy and purpose—proof that we can train our brains to experience happiness, no matter what life throws at us.

### **Dopamine: Your Brain's Built-In Happiness System**

Have you ever found your car keys after searching for 20 minutes and felt that little *YES* moment? That's dopamine, your brain's built-in reward system. Dopamine isn't just about *feeling good*; it's about motivation, learning, and memory. It acts like a Post-it note system in your brain, tagging positive experiences so you want to repeat them. But here's the catch: our brains aren't naturally wired to focus on the good.

### **Negativity Bias: When Your Brain Becomes a Drama Queen**

Ever notice how one criticism can haunt you for days while ten compliments barely register? That's the negativity bias, our brain's ancient survival mechanism. Our ancestors needed to remember danger more than joy because forgetting where the angry bear lived could be fatal. But today, that same bias magnifies stress and minimizes joy. If we don't intentionally balance it, we miss out on the good right before us. The solution? Training our brain to take in the good.

### **The R.I.S.E. Process: Teaching Your Brain to Absorb Happiness**

You must slow down and absorb positive experiences to rewire your brain for more joy. Here's a simple practice to do that using an acronym for rise.

## **R – Realize the Good**

Your brain is excellent at spotting problems, so train it to spot the good.

- That first sip of coffee? Magic.
- A stranger holding the door? Kindness exists.
- Your dog greeting you like you've been gone for a year? Pure love.

Happiness starts with noticing the good.

## **I – Intensify the Feeling**

Once you've noticed something good, turn up the volume.

- Let gratitude expand inside you.
- Breathe into the moment.
- Let joy stretch out like a deep yoga pose.

## **S – Soak It In**

Science says it takes 20 seconds for a positive experience to fully register in the brain.

- Imagine soaking up joy like a sponge.
- Let happiness settle into your body, like sunlight warming your skin.

## **E – Enjoy & Express It**

The last step? Celebrate the joy!

- Smile. Laugh. Tell someone.
- Sharing happiness doubles its impact for you and them.

## **Tips for Maximum Impact**

- Start Small – Tiny moments count.
- Be Consistent – Pause and absorb the good three times a day.
- Make It Physical – Feel happiness in your body, not just your mind.
- Share It – Talking about joy reinforces it.

The more you practice, the easier it gets. Your brain automatically starts catching good moments—like a happiness magnet.

## **Call to Action: Upgrade Your Brain's Operating System**

For the next week, take **30 seconds**, three times a day, to truly absorb a positive moment. Use the

**R.I.S.E. Process** to lock in happiness.

- **R** – Realize the Good
- **I** – Intensify the Feeling
- **S** – Soak It In
- **E** – Enjoy & Express It

## **Conclusion: The Jane Goodall Effect**

Jane Goodall's most significant discovery wasn't just about chimps, but how to see the world with wonder. Her brain wasn't naturally wired for lasting happiness, but she trained it to savor good.

And if Jane could do it in the middle of the wild, we can do it daily. By aligning neuroscience with spiritual wisdom, we unlock the full potential of our Super Brain and a truly Happy Life.

**Affirmation:** *"Every day, I train my brain to seek and savor the good, rewiring myself for lasting happiness."*

Your brain is your masterpiece, and you get to shape it. So, go out there, soak in the good, and build a brain that sees joy everywhere!