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Routes to Happiness II –

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Micro-moments of Positivity Resonance

Brian Synch

- Person in fMRI listening to another person tell a story
- Brain activity mirrored extensively
- The insula (area in the brain linked to conscious feeling state)
- Suggests that two people come to feel one shared emotion
- How well one listened predicted the amount of brain coupling

Body Synch

- The Vagus Nerve important for fight flight response but also used in the calm and connect response as it soothes your racing heart (together with oxytocin)
- Vagal tone the higher the better
- Higher vagal tone = more flexible across a range of domains (physical, mental, social)
- Higher vagal tone = more skilled socially and forge more positive relationships = more micro moments of love
- Use it or lose it!

Chemistry Synch

- Oxytocin "cuddle hormone", key role in social bonding
- Oxytocin "appears both to calm fears that might steer you away from interacting with strangers and also to sharpen your skills for connection" (Fredrickson, p. 51)
- Oxytocin one person's oxytocin flow can trigger your own



Compassion and Empathy

Empathy

We know that empathy, which is when we feel and understand (but take no action) causes the pain centres of the brain to light up in the person doing the empathy

Compassion

We know that compassion causes the reward and affiliation centres of the brain to light up





Self-Compassion

- Mindfulness awareness and acceptance (letting go) of pain
- Common humanity avoiding isolation or shame by seeing one's experiences as part of the human condition
- **Kindness** being kind and warm rather than harsh in the face of setbacks



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Homework

- Be kind to strangers (Positivity Resonance = Love)
- Loving kindness meditation <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkC0K1F8nPk&list=PL6DbJmB3fDQp <u>vwTqepv7LDjx3UqB2Ht5&index=5</u>
 </u>
- Compassionate gestures every time you touch a hot drink/glass of water, do a compassionate gesture
- Do the Self Compassion Questionnaire https://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/



centre for positive psychology and health Videos

Video on Compassion(Kirstin Neff)
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUMF5R7DoOA

Video on Love (Barbara Fredrickson)
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHoEWUTYnSo





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Thank you

Thank you for joining us for the Science of Health and Happiness here at RCSI.

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