

# FOCUS

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## The Brain Does Grow New Cells

One of the great discoveries of the 20th century was by Elizabeth Gould. A Princeton psychologist, she studied the effect of stress on the brains of experimental animals. She saw how cells die off when we are stressed. But some animals showed cells bouncing back, new cells being formed. This was forbidden by the scientific doctrine at the time. The

brain, it was believed, was fixed. You were born with a certain number of brain cells and then you slid downhill the rest of your life. There wasn't supposed to be a new cell in the brain. Yet she was discovering lots and lots of them. In 1997, 1998, and 1999, she published her breakthrough research, revealing nature's secret: The brain does grow new cells.

future must be changed. That change is painful, but soon we have adjusted and accept the loss. we go on with life. If we think the loss is irreplaceable, or if we imagine it is global (will ruin everything) or if we think it is because of some horrible personal defect, then the grief becomes permanent. Instead of a temporary period of discouragement and then the bounding back, our brains are flooded with corticosteroids, hormones designed to help us cope with short term stress. Long term, these same helpful steroids start to rob the brain of energy. And the brain cells begin to die. Not a good thing. (Continued on page 2 ).



**Do one thing different, one thing you have never done before, and your brain starts to perk up.**

One common feeling that does kill off cells is depression, the despondent, hopeless feeling that may be related to the brain's need to cope with loss. Generally, we feel a grief response when we have lost something, as the brain reorganizes itself. After all, a loss means our image of the

### Remember... Life Is Like Football

- Be flexible and trust your instincts.
- Have a game plan and believe in it.
- Don't let one or two mistakes ruin your game.
- Don't be afraid to take a time out.
- Sometimes, the best thing you can do is hand the ball off.
- If all else fails, go back to the basics.



**BEST WISHES TO ALL STUDENT ATHLETES FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON!!**

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For high school football stories, rosters, schedules and much more, visit **FRIDAY NIGHT OHIO .COM**

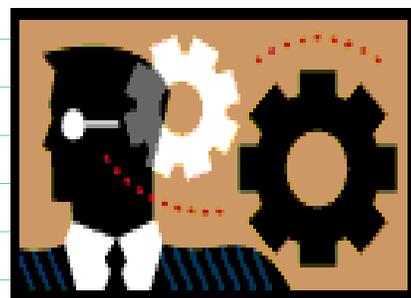
## The Brain Does Grow New Cells (continued from front page)

So if stress causes brain cell death, what makes them come back to life? New Stuff! Do one thing different, one thing you have never done before, and your brain starts to perk up. Energy flows back into the building of the brain, and the depression lifts. Here are five exercises you can do to make your brain younger:

1. Physical exercise every day. There is a great deal of evidence that people who exercise regularly flood their brains with nutrient rich blood. Older people who jog, for example, have healthier brains than younger people who are couch potatoes.
2. Learn something new. Study a new language. Take a math class. Learn to juggle. Pick up a musical instrument. Put high energy into learning this new skill. That energy translates into brain growth.
3. Do something old in a new way. Write a letter with your non-dominant hand. (Does anyone write letter by hand anymore?) when you listen to the radio tune to a new station, and try to learn a song, argue with the commentator, listen intently to a new style of music. Brainstorm some ways you can do the same-old in a fresh way.
4. Praise other people. Giving recognition and appreciation to others will fill your heart with positive feelings, which in turn trigger more energy into your brain. Pay it forward instead of paying back. If you want a world of positive people, be that person today.
5. Eat right. The "rainbow diet" is simply a method of eating that emphasizes variety. Shop for new vegetables that are colorful, eat salmon and

other fish, eat nuts, more salads, and so forth. Each time you sit down to eat, look for colorful natural foods on your plate. Shop from the edges of the supermarket, where you find the vegetables, meats, grains and dairy. The rule of thumb: If your great-grandmother wouldn't recognize it, don't eat it.

**Taken from Enjoy Life Newsletter Volume 1 Number 4 (newsletter@enjoylifebook.com) written by Lynn Johnson, Ph.D. 166 East 5900 South, Ste. B-108, Salt Lake City, Utah**



## The Gene Theory of Addictive Behavior

You may never have heard of ghrelin, but when your stomach tells you it's time to eat you are hearing from ghrelin. Produced in the stomach, the primary task of this hormone-releasing peptide is to let you know when you are hungry—however a recent Swedish study found it's possibly linked to addictive behaviors, including compulsive eating and—more surprisingly—alcohol abuse. The research explored whether the ghrelin system is part of the brain-reward system that is partially responsible for addictive behaviors. The study involved 417 people with three different drinking profiles—one group did not drink at all, a second group drank moderately, and finally the third group were heavy drinkers in treatment

for alcoholism. Study results showed that heavy drinkers, many of whom were also compulsive eaters, were more likely to have specific variations in the ghrelin producing genes and its ghrelin receptor than were people in the other two groups. The study author was Jorgen Engel, MD, PhD, professor of pharmacology of the Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. What makes this finding particularly important is the fact that not all the alcoholic subjects with the ghrelin gene variants were also overweight. He believes this may indicate that the association between the gene variation and alcoholism is quite strong. He adds that separate research indicates these gene variants may

also play a role in other compulsive behaviors besides drinking and binge eating, from chemical addictions to pathological gambling. The hope is that this research will eventually provide the basis for new pharmacological treatment alternatives to target the ghrelin system in people with the gene variants who suffer from alcoholism and possibly other addictions. One day there may be drug therapies that treat addiction by targeting the brain's ghrelin signaling system, as Dr. Engel, together with University of Gothenburg colleague Professor Suzanne Dickson, have seen early signs of success in mice. **Jorgen Engel, MD, PhD, professor of pharmacology, Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden**

## Six Keys to Friendship

Friendship is good for mental and physical health—research shows that having close friends raises self-esteem, boosts immunity and improves sleep. A study from Flinders University in Australia even found that people with many close friends live longer than those with few friends. Friendships begun in childhood are especially powerful, providing a connection to the experiences that have made us who we are. Best selling writer Jeffrey Zaslow spent two years getting to know a close-knit group of woman, now in their 40s, who met as girls in Ames, Iowa. As the 11 women moved to different states, pursued careers, married and became mothers, they maintained a powerful bond that has endured to this day. The Ames friends share a number of unspoken ground rules that are crucial to maintaining trust and connection in any friendship...

**Work at staying connected.** The friends are in e-mail contact with one another nearly every day, hitting “reply all” to keep the whole group in the loop. They get together as a full group at least once a year and in smaller groups several times a year.

**Root for one another.** They cele-

brate one another’s successes, sending cards, flowers and congratulatory e-mails. Sometimes they feel envious, but they don’t undercut one another. They recognize that friendship is not a competition and take pleasure in one another’s good fortune.

**Don’t gloat.** They don’t boast about their incomes or their spouses’ incomes. When they talk about their children’s achievements, they don’t do it in a competitive or domineering way.

**Show up for important events.** In 1986, Sheila, one of the 11 friends, died in a fall. The women were in their 20s, spread across the country, and only half of them could afford to travel back to Ames for the funeral. Those who didn’t attend still regret that they weren’t able to show support for Sheila’s family or get closure. Years later, when Karla’s teenage daughter died after a long illness, every Ames girl came to the memorial service. The friends make a point of being present for the landmark events in one another’s lives—from weddings to serious illnesses and funerals.

**Be flexible and understanding.** The friends recognize that people’s needs and capacities ebb

and flow. While they expect loyalty and goodwill for one another, they don’t demand constant attention. If an e-mail or a phone call isn’t returned right away, they don’t get resentful or worry that they’re being snubbed. They give one another room to live full lives and be busy and tired. They also are generous when one member of the circle needs more attention than usual. When Kelly was going through a divorce, the others listened as long as she needed to talk.

**Protect confidences.** Secrets shared among group members stay within the group. Disagreements with one another also get hashed out within the group—they don’t complain to spouses or to other friends.

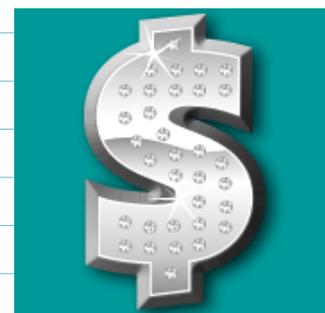
**Jeffrey Zaslow, who is based in Southfield, Michigan, writes a column on life transitions for *The Wall Street Journal*. For 14 years, he wrote an advice column for the *Chicago Sun-Times* after winning a competition to replace Ann Landers. He is coauthor of the best selling book *The Last Lecture* (Hyperion). His most recent book, *The Girls from Ames* (Gotham), also is a best seller. [www.girlsfromames.com](http://www.girlsfromames.com)**

## A Spouse Who Overspends

A spouse who overspends usually does not feel in control, not because he/she needs the items they buy. Spending makes him/her feel powerful. So nagging your spouse isn’t going to work—it’s just going to make him/her feel more out of control. *More effective:* keep track of what your household spends weekly or monthly, and then ask your spouse to review the accounts.

Don’t say anything else. This way the choice to cut back is more under your spouse’s control, making it more likely to happen.

**Tyler Cowen, PhD., professor of economics, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, writing in *Money*.**



Spending makes him/her feel more powerful...so nagging won’t work....



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## Know the Warning Signs of Teen Dating Violence

According to The National Center for Victims of Crime, one in three high school relationships is affected by dating violence. It can occur in both casual and more serious, long-term relationships. It affects girls and boys alike. Teen dating violence may escalate from verbal and emotional abuse to physical and sexual abuse, so it's important for parents and teens to know the early warning signs that a relationship or dating situation could become violent.

**Does the dating partner:**

- Pressure you to make the relationship serious or to have sex?
- Keep you from spending time with friends and family or anyone of the opposite sex?
- Check up on you all the time and insist that you stay in contact several times a day?
- Follow you wherever you go?

- Make all the decisions in the relationship, while making you think your opinion is not important?
- Tell you what to wear or how to do your make-up?
- Swear, yell, call you names, put you down or start rumors about you?
- Try to make you feel guilty?
- Drink too much or use drugs and then blame the alcohol or drugs for the behavior?
- Threaten you in any way, including physical harm?
- Break or damage things that are important to you?
- Defend the use of violence of others?

**Signs that a teen may be experiencing dating violence include:**

- Sudden changes in mood,

- personality or appearance, including changes in clothing style or make-up
- Lost confidence and the ability to make decisions
- Isolation from friends and family
- Poor academic performance
- Loss of interest in school or school activities
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Substance abuse
- Headaches, abdominal/pelvic pain
- Unexplained bruises.

**The National Center for  
Victims of Crime  
[www.ncvc.org/victims](http://www.ncvc.org/victims)**