

You See More When You Are Happy

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One of the questions people ask about happiness is whether being happier makes people dumber. There is now research from the University of Toronto that suggests that quite the opposite is true. When you are happier, you see more.

When you are in a happy mood, the researchers found, the visual cortex is able to process more information. You see more details than when you are in a negative or neutral mood. People in a good mood are able to take in more information and may process a greater number of objects in their environment. Good moods enhance the literal size of the window through which we see the world giving us a more global, integrative perspective. These findings fit in nicely with research by Dr. Lynn Johnson, that we are more intelligent, make better decisions, and are more creative when in a positive mood.

You would not think a person should make important decisions when they are drunk. So also with moods. When we are in a low or negative mood, we ought to bear that in mind and recognize that we ought to wait until we are in a better mood before we decide something important. So why not postpone arguments until you are in a better mood? I read one woman's reply, "Well, if I waited until I was in a good mood to argue, I wouldn't have anything to say." Hmmm. And how is that a problem? It seems that if we only have issues when our moods are low, they aren't real issues. If there is a genuine problem, it won't matter what your mood is. A real problem will need to be solved and being in a positive mood will enhance your problem solving skills.