

Positive Adrenalin

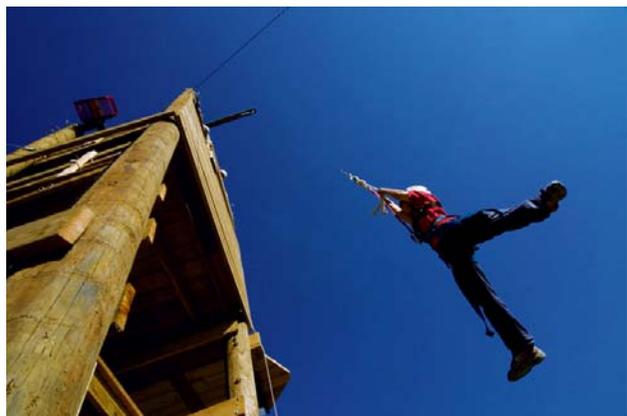


is Good For You

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When we get excited, our bodies change. Our glucose levels increase in response to our limbic system's kick in the seat of the pants, and our RPM increases, so to speak. We are in a different physiological state from our everyday "this is normal" kind of feeling. An area of scientific inquiry that has drawn many consciousness researchers to ask is: "Is there a difference between positive and negative adrenalin?" It would seem, based on preliminary evidence, that there is a very big difference.

Whether we are in terror or we are in euphoria makes a massive difference not only in our capabilities but in our overall health as well. While one set of environmental circumstances causes our inner excitement to be construed as joyful, inevitably leading to more joy, another may lead us to a very bad feeling that



causes a very bad thing to happen. The provable, repeatable evidence that scientists require for "statistical significance" may still be coming in, but we all know from our personal experience that we are not the same

people when we are having a bad time as when we are on top of the world.

Yes, your face may flush in both states, and your heart-rate will increase noticeably, but it is how we feel that is our true evidence that high levels of fear causes us to become genuinely incompetent, while being in a positive "Flow State" results in impressively high levels of ability. This is the realm of brilliance and heroism, when we become the person that we always knew we could be. It is true that there are times when negative adrenalin has allegedly allowed mothers to lift their cars off of their children like the Incredible Hulk. These exceptions to the rule are few and far between, because the truth is, purely negative adrenalin is bulldozer without a driver. All thrust and no rudder.

The true grace that human beings occasionally demonstrate under pressure is not something that comes as a result of freaking out in the right direction, but of easing off the gas pedal just enough to attain control over the direction that things are going. The positive adrenalin, then, is something that happens between 6 and 9 on the emotional energy scale, rather than a full 10. We ease off and appraise where we are going from time to time, and the sense of control that we glean from having an idea about where we are going leads us to feel safe enough to let ourselves have a good time.



If our aim is to maximize performance in any task, our true goal must therefore always be to seek out a way to enjoy the wave of energy, and appreciate the situation from a positive perspective. There are always lighter ways to view whatever we are doing, and if we stop looking for the reasons why this situation is or could become a bummer, we will begin to see the ways in which it is not. Joy is always there for the taking, and the one who chooses it most often, wins.

Try this: Take your hand and clench it into a fist around the index finger on your other hand. Hold it as tightly as you can for a full sixty seconds, and then slide your finger out of your fist. You will notice that you are unable to open your fist for a surprising length of time. This is what fear does to us. It contracts us physically and mentally, and it takes a fair bit of time to wear off. We are unable to see the better way ahead until we shake off this feeling, so we might as well work towards cooling off and look for a brighter way to view things. Positive emotion, it appears, is the secret to everything.

We can gain skill in the process of shaking off the unpleasant sensation of contraction and the negative visualizations that come along with it, but it still takes a while to work our way up out of the darkness. We have to, thought by thought, climb the ladder of emotions to a feeling that allows a sense of relief and a fresh perspective. If we have already realized that having a good time is the key to everything, than we simply have no other choice but to follow through with our dominant intention to be in a good mood. We must honor our decision to cheer up whenever we think of it, even when we are too cranky and panicked to see the light of day. This is called *emotional buoyancy*. It is the deep breath that is the means by which we regain our optimism.

Here is the tricky part. Most of the time, you will only be able to cheer yourself up. You can't base your happiness on what others are doing unless you are willing to limit your happiness to the times when the people around you find a good excuse to be happy again. Besides, have you ever tried to cheer up an angry person by reminding them to take a deep breath? Unless you have an established protocol for such things as



we do on skydiving teams, you are most likely going to get a nasty look or remark that can really challenge your ability to keep your own positive buzz. There is something about the state of negative adrenalin that resists change, even if it is for

the better. We do not like it when people try to cheer us up, just as our fists do not want to open up right away after we flex them for a protracted period of time. We need to be patient, and know that things will feel better if we keep looking for reasons why they should, and we repeatedly remember that we are ultimately in charge of our emotions.

Your happiness is more than just an emotional experience that comes as a result of things going well, it is the direct cause of the good time we are having. Happiness alters who we are on a physiological level, a cognitive level, as well as a social level. Everything gets better when we get happy. I know you already knew that, but if you are like most everyone else, you forget this from time to time. You start to think that getting something done or making a point is more important than being in a good mood. We are always wrong about this, even though we would never admit it at the time. When we are bitter and irritable and scared about something, we are cyclone of negativity, and no amount of high pressure around us will stop us from spinning. That is, until we remember, or are reminded, that we would rather be happy.

We therefore need to give all those around us the permission to remind us to slow down and breathe better when the heat is on. We give our kids time outs to when they get out of control, so perhaps we need a "Yoga Time-Out" for the grownups. It is not a punishment, and you would love the opportunity to do that, rather than continue with the momentum of a lousy day. You may still want to snap at them at first, but if you resist this impulse you will be able to allow the subtle feeling of relief that turns the tide, and sends your emotion in the general direction of up.

Imagine this: While flying through a particularly turbulent thunder storm, the Co-Pilot of the jet liner says to the Pilot, "Hey Bob, ah, remember when you asked me to remind you to slow down when you were moving and talking too fast and starting to look all frazzled and unhappy, well, that time is now..." If we always allow a message like that to come in from our Co-Pilots, we just might survive this mess.

In the end, it will always be you, alone in the Cockpit, dealing with your own emotional trip. If you do not like how you are feeling, it is ultimately up to you to get your vibe under control. Nobody will ever be able to do it for you. Knowing this, don't you get a deep sense of relief when you remember that you are in command of your own life experience? Doesn't knowing that make you want to look for a reason to have a good time starting right now? Every day is a good day if you look for why this is so. Seize the groovy, and milk it for all it's worth.