

10 SIMPLE, SCIENCE-BACKED WAYS TO BE HAPPIER TODAY

2. SLEEP MORE--YOU'LL BE LESS SENSITIVE TO NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

We know that sleep helps our bodies to recover from the day and repair themselves, and that it helps us focus and be more productive. It turns out, it's also important for our happiness.

In *Nature Shock*, Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman explain how sleep affects our positivity:

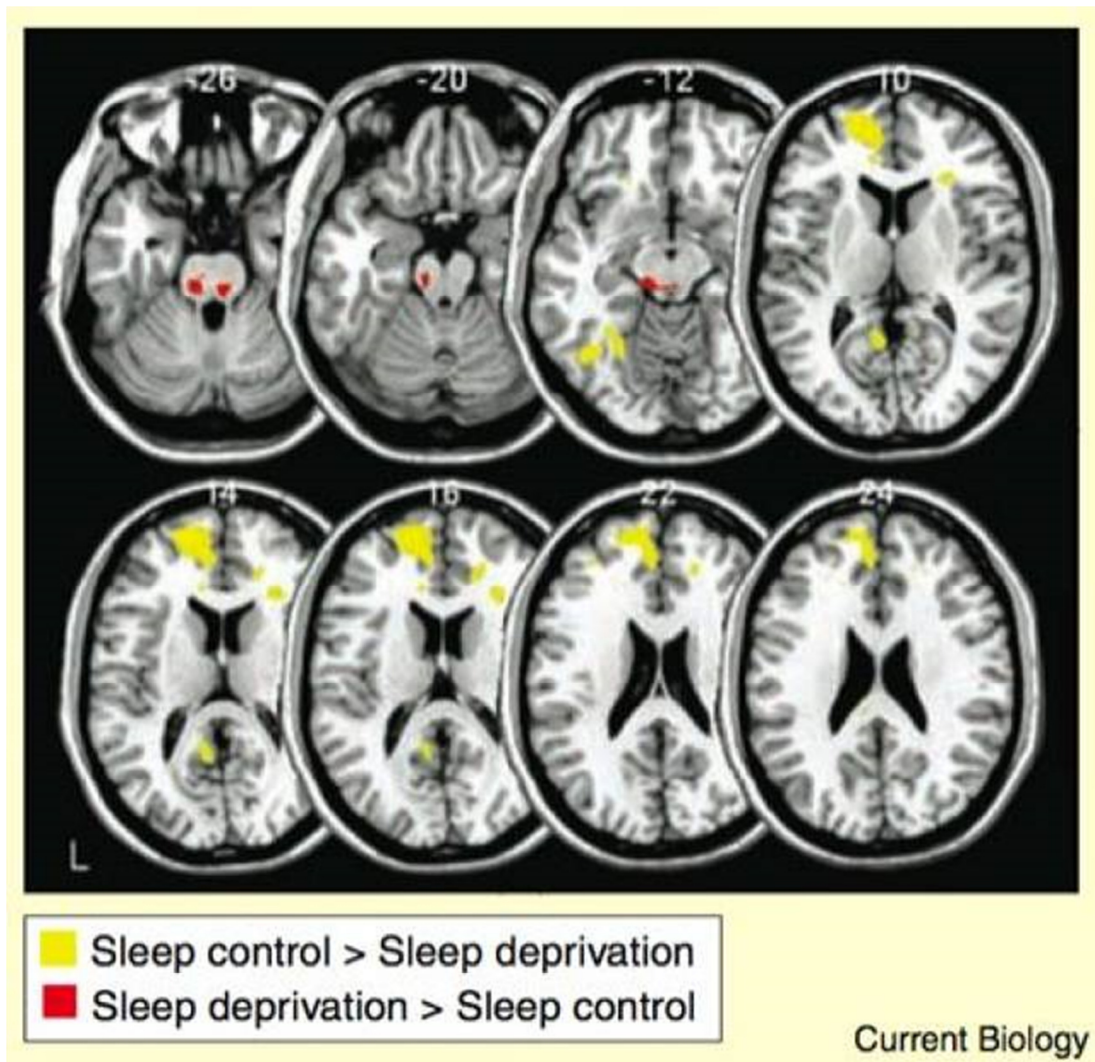
Negative stimuli get processed by the amygdala; positive or neutral memories gets processed by the hippocampus. Sleep deprivation hits the hippocampus harder than the amygdala. The result is that sleep-deprived people fail to recall pleasant memories, yet recall gloomy memories just fine.

In one experiment by Walker, sleep-deprived college students tried to memorize a list of words. They could remember 81% of the words with a negative connotation, like "cancer." But they could remember only 31% of the words with a positive or neutral connotation, like "sunshine" or "basket."

The BPS Research Digest explores another study that proves sleep affects our sensitivity to negative emotions. Using a facial recognition task over the course of a day, the researchers studied how sensitive participants were to positive and negative emotions. Those who worked through the afternoon without taking a nap became more sensitive late in the day to negative emotions like fear and anger.

Using a face recognition task, here we demonstrate an amplified reactivity to anger and fear emotions across the day, without sleep. However, an intervening nap blocked and even reversed this negative emotional reactivity to anger and fear while conversely enhancing ratings of positive (happy) expressions.

Of course, how well (and how long) you sleep will probably affect how you feel when you wake up, which can make a difference to your whole day. Especially this graph showing how your brain activity decreases is a great insight about how important enough sleep is for productivity and happiness:



Another study tested how employees' moods when they started work in the morning affected their work day.

Researchers found that employees' moods when they clocked in tended to affect how they felt the rest of the day. Early mood was linked to their perceptions of customers and to how they reacted to customers' moods.

And most importantly to managers, employee mood had a clear impact on performance, including both how much work employees did and how well they did it.

Sleep is another topic we've looked into before, exploring how much sleep we really need to be productive.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3015486/how-to-be-a-success-at-everything/10-simple-science-backed-ways-to-be-happier-today>