

SURPRISE!

Surprises, especially positive ones, are good for you because **they trigger a dopamine and noradrenaline (dopamine) release, enhancing attention, motivation, and feelings of joy**. Surprises also serve a critical learning function, forcing the brain to pause, focus on the unexpected, and update beliefs about the world, leading to better decision-making and resilience.



For Your Brain:

- **Dopamine Boost:** Unexpected positive stimuli cause the brain's pleasure centers to light up, releasing dopamine, which is crucial for attention and motivation.
- **Enhanced Memory:** Positive surprises are stored more effectively in memory, creating lasting positive experiences and strong emotional connections.
- **Improved Decision-Making:** By revealing inaccuracies in our expectations, surprise provides new insights and helps us make more effective plans and decisions.

For Your Learning and Growth:

- **Learning and Belief Change:** Surprise acts as a powerful error signal, making the brain pause and update its understanding of the world.
- **Increased Resilience:** Unexpected moments of joy can help build resilience in the face of uncertainty, a vital skill for navigating challenges.

- **Stimulating Creativity:** The "shock" of a surprise can create a temporary opening in the mind, making it more receptive to new ideas and creative thought.

For Your Social Connections:

- **Strengthening Bonds:** Giving and receiving surprises strengthens bonds between people, as the effort and thoughtfulness involved create a unique connection.
- **Fostering a Sense of Wonder:** A surprise can create a moment of wonder and break the monotony of daily life, leading to greater overall happiness.

Simply, a surprise means that we receive unexpected stimuli interrupting our ongoing thoughts and activities. It disturbs the coherence and predictability of our reality, and, because of the disruption, it takes time for us to process. Once we've processed the surprise, we either become happy (with a positive surprise) or disappointed/scared (with a negative one).