

There's a Holiday Network In Your Brain



T'is the season for your brain to activate its holiday network. You think it's the stores' fault for blurring any semblance of respectful time between sitting down to eat turkey and racing off to Black Friday and temporarily collapsing after Cyber Monday.

Come Tuesday, until the silver ball drops at midnight New Year's Eve, your brain's holiday network is alive. It makes no difference if you can't stand the sound of another cheery jingle, fear a UPS delivery of another fruit cake, or are appalled at the trending fashion of ugly Christmas sweaters, your brain is primed.

According to Dr. Bryan Haddock, a medical physicist and his team at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, they have identified a holiday network in the brain. Unexpectedly, while conducting migraine research, healthy subjects when shown "... warm and fuzzy Christmas-themed photos " had corresponding brain activity recorded by fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imagery).

The Holiday Network

Basically, your holiday network is composed of the

"... the occipital lobe, which is associated with vision;

the primary and premotor cortex, associated with movement;
and

the bilateral primary somatosensory cortex, associated with the sense of touch."

Of course, who's brain can resist Santa Claus in his red suit, prancing reindeer and, and a white fluffy beard to tug at?

The Larger Holiday Network

But, there are other things turning on the brain's holiday network. Author, Jacqueline Howard reports other brain studies where there's activity related to:

- Charitable giving and receiving: the mesolimbic reward system
- Gratitude: the anterior cingulate cortex and the medial prefrontal cortex
- Stress: the hippocampus activated by an enzymatic trigger
- Sugar: the cerebral cortex and its reward mechanism
- SAD (seasonal affect disorder), the effects of the serotonin transporter protein

Why There's a Holiday Network

While science may know what parts of your brain are being turned on this holiday season, they don't know the how or the why.

Your brain has a holiday network that's been waiting all year for this. [Click To Tweet](#)

I'd like to suggest it's because your brain has been patiently waiting all year long.

It's faithfully performed its duties, it's been asked to function with little sleep, and it's bored.

It's ready for –

excitement, joy, hope, magic, celebration,

sharing and caring, holiday music, festivities with family and friends,

good food and fine wine, a time for old memories and the time to create new ones,

candlelight, first snowfall, bows, ribbons and ornaments, trees that are pretty regardless if they are real or fake,

fresh baked cookies, beautifully decorated gifts, and reverent worship.

Yes, there's stress, feelings of loss, and sadness, but there is also wonderment that each new season brings.

Let your brain's holiday network experience every wonderful moment.

Resource:

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/holiday-season-brain_us_5672f4e9e4b0dfd4bcc

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