

# Episode 0005

## Manufacturing Happiness

Show Transcript



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00:04

Dr. Gala Gorman: Dopamine is linked to the experience of being new. To being novel. That is the reason why the experience fades. We've got to find some new exciting thing to keep the dopamine running.

00:20

Announcer: You've tuned to Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. Here, you'll find Sage Advice for taking inspired action. Awareness is the key. With this key, it's easier to navigate in the human world with all of its detours. It requires that we get to know ourselves intimately. If you choose to join us, this just might make you an Awareness Addict . . . alive, alert, awake and aware of life's possibilities.

00:52

Dr. Gala Gorman: This is Episode 5. In this episode, we are going to be happy. If you're wondering how we're going to do that . . . thinking it's a long way from where you are right now to happy, I'm going to challenge you to try a new approach. I'm Dr. Gala Gorman and as an Awareness Addict, I'm constantly looking for ways to wake myself up to more of life's opportunities. I hope you'll want to do the same.

01:16

There is an article that I ran across recently talking about something that actually is not new to me. I thought that it was worthy of sharing with you. When we are trying to ramp up the happiness in our lives sometimes there are small things that we can do in our environment that will make a big difference.

In this particular research study conducted by Rutgers University in the US, they found that the presence of flowers triggers positive emotions and heightens feelings of satisfaction. I know this definitely works for myself. Sometimes I will pick up flowers at the grocery store. They

are not necessarily expensive or over the top red roses but, just bringing them home and clipping them and assembling them in a vase. putting them out in the table or the counter, gives me a feeling of prosperity. It adds a little beauty and life to my surroundings. It warms my heart.

02:23

Another survey that was conducted by Hunch.com found that 71% of people who make their beds consider themselves happy while 62% of non-bed-makers say they're unhappy. Now, I've heard about this bed-making idea before. And, I actually tried it for myself. When I leave the bed unmade there comes a point in time . . . getting towards the day where it feels like, "Why even bother making the bed?"

I work out of the house ... sometimes I'm in and out of the bedroom. I notice that when I walk by the bed, I get an anxious feeling, "I should've taken care of that." I have this sense of being a bit out of control . . . living a disorderly life. When I get out of bed in the morning, I may not make the bed right away. I usually have a morning practice that includes meditation and prayer time. But when I go back into the bedroom, I try to stop and take a few minutes and make the bed.

03:37

When I was preparing for this episode today, I walked past my bed and realized I hadn't made it. I thought I'd better practice what I preach. I stopped, took a few minutes, and made the bed. I just turned back and looked at it. I realized that there was a lightness in my heart after I completed it that hadn't been there before.

These are a couple of easy ways ... inexpensive or free ways ... that you can add a little lightness to your life. Just pick up some flowers. If you are out for a walk in a neighborhood and you see a flower that is going to be dead in a couple of days anyway, clip it and bring it home. Put it in a little vase and just lighten up your life that way. Or, do like I do sometimes and pick up some inexpensive flowers at the

grocery store. A 100% free option ... make that bed and feel like you are living an orderly existence.

04:40

Let's take a moment to develop awareness. This is something you can practice anywhere . . . anytime. Begin by noticing where your breath is landing in your body? Are you feeling your breath in your chest? Is it expanding your rib cage? Or, even your belly?

Just become aware of your breathing.

Now, we're going to breathe intentionally. We'll start by breathing deeply into our belly. Breathe deeply . . . expanding your belly. Notice how it feels for your belly to expand. Then, pull your abdomen in so that all of the stale air gets pushed out on the exhale.

Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply . . . all the way into your belly. Expand your belly. And again, breathe out and flatten your tummy. Squeeze all that air out.

Next, we'll move the breath up to our rib cage. Intentionally expand your ribcage with the breath. It may feel like your ribs are stretching out on both sides . . . or you may feel it expanding your back. Just notice how that feels. You're stretching your lungs to the side and creating flexibility in your ribs. Take another breath into your ribcage.

Now, let's go back to how you were probably breathing when we started this practice. Breathe into your upper chest. You can feel your breastbone raise and lower with the breath. Notice how it feels to take a shallow breath now that we have expanded the breath into our belly and rib cage.

We have sent a clear message to our brain and nervous system that we can take control. Let's use this feeling of empowerment to practice Aware Appreciation.

What is ONE BIG THING that you appreciate right now? And, keep this in mind as you notice more things to appreciate as you move through your day.

06:59 Have you wondered why it feels so good to be in love . . . especially new love? If we want to learn to manufacture happiness, examining what I refer to as “newness drug” can provide some much needed insight. Let’s take control over our happiness factory.

07:18 You may have figured out by now that I like to turn to the dictionary regularly to see what the powers that be say about the words that we toss around in our world. In this episode, we are talking about manufacturing happiness.

The word happiness is interesting. That is another one of the words I like to use. The dictionary defines happiness as “enjoying or characterized by well-being and contentment.” I think this is really important because if somebody ask you, “Are you happy?” Or, “What makes you happy?” Can you answer that question? It goes back to personal preferences. If we don’t know what we like, then we can’t possibly be happy because if our happiness is dependent on having things that we personally enjoy in our lives ... and we are not in touch with that it is understandable why there is such a disconnect for us between feeling content and not feeling content.

08:29 Another thing to keep in mind is that happiness is a state of being. Actually, any sort of emotion like happiness is fleeting. The only way we perpetuate a feeling for good or for bad is to keep adding more thoughts to it. One of the reasons we practice aware appreciation is because we keep adding more “feel good” thoughts as we work through the exercise. That helps us to build a bit of momentum around feeling good. We can then carry that into whatever other

experience that we are needing to have as a human. Understanding that this is a state of being and that we are going to pass through it, we know that we either can milk it for all it's worth and keep it going or figure out a way to nip it in the bud. If it is a feeling that we are not enjoying, then we've got to find a way to nip that off and turn things around.

09:36

It is fascinating when you understand how the brain makes us feel like we are happy. It does this in a number of ways. I was reading a book called "Habits of a Happy Brain" by Graziano Breuning recently. This is not new information but she assembled it in a way that caused me to think. Actually there are 4 chemicals in the brain. You have probably heard this before but let me remind you. Dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and endorphins.

Dopamine is what we are experiencing when we have that new love experience. Newness drug is actually a surge of dopamine running through our system. The brain sends us a message, "Yeah! This is good. We like this, more of this." The only problem is that dopamine is linked to the experience of being new. To being novel. That is the reason why the experience fades. We've got to find some new exciting thing to keep the dopamine running. This can be detrimental if you are constantly looking for a relationship that has the excitement of newness drug. You've got to find other more productive ways to generate dopamine. At least that is what I suggest.

Again, this happiness thing is a personal preference so you can do it in whatever way "floats your boat." Let's talk about some other ways that we can get our brain to signal the happiness factor.

11:26

The next one is with serotonin. The interesting thing with serotonin is that it is all about respect. Do we feel respected? Do we feel like we are appreciated? Have we contributed in a way that we've been recognized? The

serotonin thing is important. If you recall Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, feeling respect is one of those things that we need as humans. Once we get beyond just the basics of food and shelter, we need the respect factor. That is the serotonin thing that is going to make us feel really good.

12:10

Next is oxytocin. Oxytocin is the relationship factor. This isn't the newness drug relationship factor that I was referring to with the dopamine. This is that feeling of being known, deeply loved, understood, and accepted. It's that connection. The connection of a mother and her child. "I love this child unconditionally." That is the oxytocin. It's a really scrumptious feeling of depth that maybe you don't get with some of these other chemicals that are roaming around in your brain.

12:54

Lastly let's talk about endorphins. Endorphins are one of the happy chemicals that we can create pretty much at will. Exercise is one of the greatest ways to create endorphins. When you hear about the runner's high that is the endorphins racing through your system when you've gotten good exercise. You got that heart pumping. The blood flowing ... and it clears out your head. It really makes you feel good. You may be able to see that we have a lot of control over endorphins where we may not have so much control over some of these other things.

With dopamine, if we constantly seeking a new experience that can be disappointing. If it doesn't happen we are not feeling it.

With serotonin, if we need respect from people outside of ourselves that may not happen. If we are waiting on that to happen for us to feel good, that can fall a little flat as well.

14:08

And then oxytocin. A lot of times people we love disappoint us. We want to feel we are loved and appreciated just the way we are. We feel like the love is conditional. Oxytocin

can be disappointing at times as well. When we are talking about manufacturing happiness one of the things we can focus on is this endorphin thing.

If you are feeling a little blue ... feeling a little low ... one of the best things to do is get outside and get some sunshine. Get your heart pumping. Get a new fresh perspective.

I like to point out that Facebook does a fantastic job with this. Now, granted Facebook isn't all it's cracked up to be. I realize that, for some, Facebook actually ends up being depressing because people see that everybody else's life appears to be going great and their life may not be quite so fantastic. But what I have noticed is when Facebook sends me pictures from something that happened a year, a two, or three ago, it actually gives me a warm feeling of recollection. The recollection of an experience that I may have had with family or friends. I get that sense of satisfaction reminding myself that life has its sweet moments.

I think it is fascinating. Actually, Facebook has done a great job of figuring out how to incorporate themselves deeply into our lives. When you study happiness, one of the ways that we can manufacture happiness is to actually go back and look through old photos and recall happy times and experiences. Facebook is making that easy for us.

It is up to us. Are we going to manufacture and create happiness in our lives? Or, are we going to let life's experiences that may not be so pleasant take control?

16:18

And just summing it up today, Charlie is my husband. Charlie was watching a movie on TV. He comes home after a long day. He is a mental health counselor. He comes home to unwind and watch a little TV at night. He flipped to the movie, "Taken," with Liam Neeson. I'm pretty careful not to get caught up in a movie that Charlie is watching because it rarely meets my criteria. I'm a romantic comedy has-to-have a happy ending sort of person but this movie intrigued



me a bit. I ended up seeing little chunks here and there ... about 20 minutes of the movie.

One of the scenes was intense. These Albanians were kidnapping being young women who were visiting Paris on holiday. I won't share the details with you because, honestly, I don't even want to re-ignite the memory for myself. But it was disturbing. The images were so disturbing for me that I lost almost an entire night of sleep over it.

There have been a few movies in my life that have disturbed me to that great degree but, I don't know that I ever remember a movie disturbing me when I only saw little chunks ... a total of 20 minutes. This movie was very disturbing to me. Certainly, it did not leave me with a sense of well-being and contentment. On the other hand, Charlie loves the psychological-thriller sort of movies. He absolutely loved the plot and the intensity. He was so intrigued with Liam Neeson's performance, he even googled Liam Neeson to learn more about his career and how this movie was actually a departure from his normal roles.

18:27

I think this is important for us to recognize . . . because my sense of contentment, well-being, and happiness is very different from another person's same sense of contentment well-being, and happiness. That often happens right under the same roof. We need to stay on our own side of the fence but also make sure that it is okay to pursue experiences that meet our own criteria. My comment to Charlie the next day was, "A great reminder. I won't be getting pulled into any of the movies that you are watching anytime soon." It is not Charlie's fault. Charlie loved the movie. It is okay for him to turn the TV on and watch a movie that he likes. I just know that I have to be careful because our "great movie" criteria is very different.

19:31

Question: I've been dealing with some serious health issues in the last year. After three surgeries, I've lost everything . . . my job, my savings. I feel like I'm starting all over again. I am fairly young but it's depressing. I realize I should just be glad I'm alive. How can I focus on what to appreciate rather than what I've lost?

19:58

Dr. Gala Gorman: First, thanks for submitting your question. It's understandable that you would be feeling depressed. You could certainly use a dose of happiness. Since you already seem to be stretching to find things to appreciate, I'll just remind you that using the *Aware Appreciation Worksheet* and writing it down will give the process some extra juice.

I also suggest that you find small things you can do to begin to restore some order to your life. When we're dealing with health issues . . . especially for an extended period of time . . . it can become all consuming. We tend to set things aside thinking, "I'll come back to it when things settle down." Things won't settle down until we come back around and start putting things in order.

Remember, it can be as simple as committing to make the bed every morning when you get up. Try that for a week. Then add another bit of order . . . clean out your car. You get the picture. We're all guilty of letting our surroundings become disorderly. And, it affects our mood. So, start there and let me know how it goes!

21:03

Announcer: Are you ready to create an attitude adjustment? Practicing *Aware Appreciation* will make a positive difference. You can access the *Aware Appreciation Worksheet* by visiting [AwarenessAddicts.com/AA](http://AwarenessAddicts.com/AA). In just a few minutes a day,

you'll stop negativity in its tracks...and gain some insight and awareness in the process.

Your feedback makes a difference. What part of this episode helped you the most? Join the Awareness Addicts Facebook group and share your thoughts. Make sure you leave a review wherever you've accessed the show. And, if you know others who could use some divine inspiration, share with them! Remember, all the links and resources are available at [AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes](http://AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes). Don't waste another moment feeling confused and stuck. As an Awareness Addict, you're alive, alert, awake and aware of life's possibilities.

22:02

Dr. Gala Gorman: After all this talk about happiness, you may be seeing some things about your life you'd like to change . . . to make happiness a more constant state. At the risk of raining on your parade, igniting change requires the willingness to be unhappy in the short term. Let's make the short-term as short as possible. We'll explore how to do that in the next episode. You don't want to miss it.

22:28

Announcer: This was Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. For more information and to find any resources mentioned in this episode, visit [AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes](http://AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes). Thank you for tuning in.

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