

Robert M. Sapolsky

Quotes

*Stress, Brain, Oxytocin, Behavior, Long, Smart, Important, Mind, Strong,
Individual Differences, Giving, Sick, Interesting, Levels, Appreciate, People,
Groups, Confused, Genes, Monk*

Stress is not a state of mind... it's measurable and dangerous, and humans can't seem to find their off-switch.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

We live well enough to have the luxury to get ourselves sick with purely social, psychological stress.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

The purpose of science is not to cure us of our sense of mystery and wonder, but to constantly reinvent and reinvigorate it.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

An open mind is a prerequisite to an open heart.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

But if you get chronically, psychosocially stressed, you're going to compromise your health. So, essentially, we've evolved to be smart enough to make ourselves sick.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

The less it is possible that something can be, the more it must be.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Essentially, we humans live well enough and long enough, and are smart enough, to generate all sorts of stressful events purely in our heads.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

We all seek out stress. We hate the wrong kinds of stress but when it's the right kind, we love it - we pay good money to be stressed by a scary movie, a roller coaster ride, a challenging puzzle.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

What does the frontal cortex do? Gratification postponement, executive

function, long-term planning, and impulse control. Basically, it makes you do the harder thing.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

If a rat is a good model for your emotional life, you're in big trouble.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

What happened in the milliseconds before a behavior to cause it? That's in the neurobiological realm.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Genes are rarely about inevitability, especially when it comes to humans, the brain, or behavior. They're about vulnerability, propensities, tendencies.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

The frontal cortex doesn't even fully develop until age 25, which is wild!

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Perhaps most excitingly, we are uncovering the brain basis of our behaviors - normal, abnormal and in-between. We are mapping a neurobiology of what makes us us.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

How much you groom somebody else is more important than who grooms you.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Depression is not generalized pessimism, but pessimism specific to the effects of one's own skilled action.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

The regulation of genes is often more interesting than the genes themselves, and it's the environment that regulates genes.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Some Poor grad student pressing on the flanks of a hamster and out comes a doctorate on the other side

~Robert M. Sapolsky

To out-group-members, oxytocin makes you crappier - less cooperative and more preemptively aggressive. It's not the luv hormone. It's the in-group parochialism/xenophobia hormone.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Almost always, genes are about potentials and vulnerabilities rather than about determinism.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

If you care about your longevity and health, be a socially affiliated baboon who is better than high-ranking ones at walking away from provocations.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Oxytocin is lauded for how it promotes warmth, generosity, social bonding, cooperation, trust, and compassion.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Get it wrong, and we call it a cult. Get it right, in the right time and the right place, and maybe, for the next few millennia, people won't have to go to work on your birthday.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

I had never planned to become a savanna baboon when I grew up; instead, I had always assumed I would become a mountain gorilla.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Only humans invent moralizing gods who monitor our behavior.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

The fascinating thing about our best and worst behaviors isn't the behavior itself - the brain tells the muscles to do something or other - big deal. It's the meaning of the behavior.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

It's great to have a buff frontal cortex to do that harder thing - for example, help a person in need rather buy some useless, shiny gee-gaw.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

As long as experiencing your optimal level of good stress doesn't damage others, it's hard to objectively define where normal enjoyment of stimulation becomes adrenaline junkiehood.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

We've evolved to be smart enough to make ourselves sick.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

We're getting along so well; I trust you so much for this one second that I'm going to let you yank on me.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Genes are important for understanding our behavior. Incredibly important - after all, they code for every protein pertinent to brain function, endocrinology, etc.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Until you appreciate something crucial - It is incredibly easy to manipulate us as to who counts as an Us, who as a Them.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Oxytocin is a Teflon hormone - bad news rolls off it.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Give lab rats oxytocin and, according to that meme, they get better at talking about their feelings and sing like Joan Baez.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Naturally, things are more complicated - those groovy, pro-social effects of oxytocin apply to how we interact with in-group members.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Most of us don't collapse into puddles of stress-related disease.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Importantly, rather than promoting aggression, testosterone promotes whatever is needed to maintain status when challenged.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Hormones influencing the sensitivity of the person to environmental stimuli.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

The frontal cortex is an incredibly interesting part of the brain - ours is proportionately bigger and/or more complex than in any other species.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

What happened during the minutes before? That's the realm of sensory stimuli of the nervous system.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

We are just another primate but a very confused, malleable one.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

It's probably even the case that if you stoked up some Buddhist monks with tons of testosterone, they'd become wildly competitive as to who

can do the most acts of random kindness.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

Individual differences in testosterone level predict very little about differences in aggression.

~Robert M. Sapolsky

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