

April, 2011

Staff

Eric Nead
-The Spotlight Effect

Jill Lenzen
-Control Condition

Katy Bounds
-Tap-Down Processor

Upcoming Events:

Creating Personal Essays for Graduate/Professional School

• Wednesday, April 13, 4:30 p.m., ASB 222, CSB

Thinking about Graduate School?

• Wednesday, April 13, 7 p.m., Gorecki 204C, CSB

Senior Psychology Graduation Reception

• Saturday, May 14th, 4:30pm-6:00pm, Gorecki 204C, CSB

Senior Psychology Graduation Reception

• Saturday, May 14th, 4:30pm-6:00pm, Gorecki 204C, CSB

- See Annemieke Lagerwaard (alagerwaar@csbsju.edu) with any questions.

The Freudian Slip

CSB/SJU Psychology Department Newsletter



College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

SPRING FEVER PSYCHOLOGY AS THE COLD BITTER NIGHTS

by: Eric Nead
—The Spotlight Effect

As the cold bitter nights of winter slowly are replaced by the long sun-filled days of spring, a change occurs within the human psyche, which has come to be known as “Spring Fever.” Don’t let the word “fever” fool you though, because this change is anything but an illness. The polar opposite of the “winter blues,” those experiencing Spring Fever usually display “symptoms” such as increased energy levels, increased sex drive, feelings of giddiness, and a general feeling of well-being.

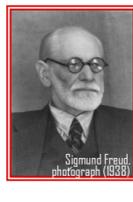
Spring Fever occurs for both psychological and physiological reasons. Psychologically speaking, it is only natural for people to feel refreshed and energized by warmer weather after being cooped up indoors after six months of snow. Spring Fever is more than just the relief of finally seeing the end of winter however, for chemical changes in the body also

contributes to feelings of increased energy. For example, regions far from the equator, such as Minnesota, typically experience greater numbers of Spring Fever cases because of the drastic change in the amount of natural sunlight exposure. The lack of sunlight in winter reduces human’s production of serotonin or “the happiness hormone” while simultaneously increasing the production of melatonin or “the hormone of darkness.” Thus in the winter we tend to feel sluggish and tired because of the increased melatonin and decreased serotonin levels in the brain. When spring arrives, these two chemicals switch roles and we see ourselves becoming more active than we were in the winter months.

All of the positives of Spring Fever though can have some pretty negative side effects. The rush of energy people feel often leaves them feeling

invincible which leads to an increase in reckless behavior. Studies have found that the number of automobile accidents increases during spring as well as reckless sexual behavior due to increased libido. Furthermore, individuals suffering from depression are at a greater risk of suicide because the increased energy they feel might enable them to act upon any suicidal inclinations they may have.

Such cases of negative experiences of Spring Fever are rare however, and the overwhelming majority of people adjust to the seasonal change after a several weeks.



Sigmund Freud
photograph (1938)

FORGETTING OURSELVES IN THE PRESENT, WHILE LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

by: Jill Lenzen
—Control Condition

Going from high school to college is a time in everyone’s life where we make the transition from adolescent to early adulthood. We are in the process of transitioning from a child or adolescent to a full responsible adult. This time in our lives is when many of us are learning to take responsibility for our wellbeing for the first time. This is a time were many of us are just finding ourselves and beginning to understand who we really are. We change in our physical, cognitive, identity, family life, and occupational development.

We are in the best age of our lives. Our bodies are physically in their prime when we hit early adulthood. We are the healthiest individuals in our society, and we are much more likely to die from violent causes, such as a car accident, then disease. Our intellectual abilities are also at their peak while we are young adults. Research indicates that tasks that

require quick responses, short-term memory, and the ability to perceive complex relations are performed most efficiently during the late teens and early twenties when compared to all age groups. Young adults are also in the process of finding and solidifying their identity. Especially if we attend college, we are more likely to truly find ourselves, and over time, we are more able to answer the question of “Who am I?” Also included in young adulthood are the steps many individuals take to start a family. We date and finally marry individuals who we hope to be with for the rest of our lives. While not everyone gets married or is in a relationship at this particular stage in life, these important commitments are right around the corner for many of us. Lastly, but not the least important is our occupational development. For many of us, the question of why we went to college is to “get a good job”, or to get into graduate school so we can “get a good job”. Our occupational career choice is not always a one-shot decision, and often takes many years to figure out.

While we continue to struggle with the question of whether or not this career path is correct for us, we must keep in mind that everyone else in this stage of life is struggling with the same thing. Getting our first real job and going out into the working world is a fulfillment that many of us see as our transition into adulthood. This change will ultimately end the early adulthood stage in our lives, which also will start to end many benefits and advantages we have had during our early adulthood.

We are growing up and are looking forward into our futures, five or even ten years down the road. While being an adult has its advantages, we must not forget to look at the advantages in our lives today. We are going through drastic changes in this stage in our lives, and we are forgetting to look at what is happening right now in our lives and enjoy it. We do not have the opportunity to live our lives with all the benefits of being young forever, but we must enjoy them while we can. So, while every one of us must

do well in our schooling to have the future that we dream of, we must also cherish our lives at this moment because in a few more years, we will be entering into the adult world. We will never get the chance to live like this again so go out and enjoy being young while you can!

Reference:

Gormly, A. & Brodzinsky, D. (1989). *Lifespan Human Development: Fourth Edition*. Orlando, Florida: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

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