

The Male Brain by Louann Brizendine

Book Summary

The cast of male hormone characters and how they affect a male's brain:

Testosterone: Zeus-King of the male hormones he is dominant aggressive and all-powerful. Focus and goal oriented he builds all that is male, including the compulsion to outrank other males in the pecking order. He drives the masculine sweat glands that make the masculine smell.

Vasopressin: The White Knight-vasopressin is the hormone of gallantry and monogamy, aggressively and protectively defending turf, mate and children. Along with testosterone he runs the male brain circuits and enhances masculinity.

Mullerian Inhibiting substance (MIS): Hercules-he is strong tough and fearless, also known as the "defeminizer" he ruthlessly strips away all that is feminine from the male. MIS builds brain circuits for exploratory behavior, suppresses brain circuits for female type behaviors, destroys the female reproductive organs and helps build the male reproductive organs and brain circuits.

Oxytocin: The Lion Tamer-with just a few cuddles and strokes, this "down boy" hormone settles even the fiercest of beasts. He increases empathic ability and increases trust circuits, romantic love circuits and attachment circuits in the brain. He reduces stress hormones, lowers men's blood pressure and plays a major role in fathers bonding with their infants. He promotes feelings of safety and security and is to blame for a man's post coital narcolepsy.

Prolactin: Mr. Mom-he causes sympathetic pregnancy syndrome in fathers to be and increases Dad's ability to hear their babies cry. He stimulates connections in the male brain for paternal behavior, and decreases sex drive.

Cortisol: The Gladiator-when threatened he is angry, fired up and ready to fight for life and limb.

Androstenedion: Romeo-The charming seducer of women. When released by the skin as a pheromone he does more for the man sex appeal than any after-shave. Activates the male sexual circuits and is single minded in his dogged pursuit of his dogged mate. Prized for his confidence and bravery he can be a convincing seducer but when he is irritable he can be the grouchiest of bears.

Dopamine: The Energizer- the intoxicating life of the party, he is all about feeling good, having fun and going fast. Excited and highly motivated, he is puffed up to win and driven to hit the jackpot again and again. But watch out he is addictively

rewarding particularly in the rough and tumble play of boyhood, the sexual play of manhood where dopamine increases ecstasy during orgasm.

Estrogen: The Queen-although she doesn't have the same power over a man as Zeus, she may be the true force behind the throne, running most of the male brain circuits. She has the ability to increase his desire to cuddle and relate by stimulating his oxytocin.

Depending on the interplay of these hormones at various stages in a male's life behavior is driven and shaped.

Through every phase of life the brain structures and hormones of boys and men create a male reality that is fundamentally different from the female one and frequently oversimplified and misunderstood

Male cell has Y chromosome, female does not

Powerful new scientific tools allow scientists to see inside the working human brain while performing different activities and in different situations

Men have + 3 times the brain space devoted to sexual drive in their hypothalamus

Larger processors in the core of the most primitive area of the brain the amygdala which registers fear, triggers protective aggression

Brain circuits for mate protection and territorial defense are hormonally primed for action starting at puberty

Men use different brain circuits to process spatial information and solve emotional problems

Brain circuits are wired to the muscles differently especially in the face

Male and female brains are similar but they arrive at and accomplish the same goals and tasks using different circuits