

Wizards Handbook 2023

A wizards guide to better living

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Overview

In our world today we have never been so far from our roots.

Communities have become digital. Technology makes things happen faster. Time slips away so quickly. Attention has become a currency. Devices seem to rule our lives. Burnout and divorce are the norm.

Getting back to purpose has never been so necessary.

Intuition tells us what we need, and this handbook zooms in on what it is that makes a wizard event so special.

Nature

We evolved from nature so it's fitting that we look back to nature for guidance.

Science still trying to explain the magic of nature.

Shinrin- yoku- 'making contact with and taking in the atmosphere of the forest.'



Science on nature

We can measure physiological changes:

- Brain activity relaxes, lowering cortisol (stress hormone)
- Blood pressure drops
- Reduced blinking and less frequent gaze shifting
- Increased pleasure = dopamine
- Improves cognitive ability

Research demonstrates that surgery patients find reduced pain and improved levels of healing in nature.

“Exploit nature like a drug” - Roger Ulrich - Environmental psychologist/researcher

Resilience in nature

Nature shows resilience.
Can we find resilience in
ourselves?

The Gordon Wattle - a rare
sight, and home to the Blue
Mountains. Particularly
resilient to hot burning fire -
use fire to open the seeds
and germinate.



Photo by Barry Collier / NSW DPIE



Finding awe

We find awe in nature - In its beauty, its resilience, its power.

Dacher Keltner, defined as an emotion 'in the upper reaches of pleasure and on the boundary of fear.'

Nature incites a sense of awe but sometimes we must use curiosity to find it..

Awe has been called an "instrument of unselfing" and has been said to promote prosocial behaviour.

More on awe

Experiencing awe shifts our perspective, increases our curiosity and our boundaries. This shift allows us to feel more connected to humanity, which spurs altruistic behavior.

It seems that seeing ourselves as small in comparison to nature and what it encompasses, invokes a sense of connectedness with other living beings that nothing we encounter in our man-made world can do.



The Overview Effect

- “Overview effect” - the phenomenon astronauts looking back on earth
- Researchers who study this effect suggest that it stems from seeing the earth’s beauty and fragility, coupled with a dissolution of the boundaries that separate us on earth.

Visual appeal in the form of fractals

Fractals

Fractals are non-regular, never ending geometric patterns that can occur anywhere in nature (e.g. clouds, waves, sand dunes)

They illustrate clearly that nature isn't disordered, and our brains gravitate to these fractal patterns.

They can be found in manmade environments, but are more common in nature, and our brains prefer the ones that are embedded in nature.





Wandering

Occasionally, whilst walking through nature, a wizard will take time to be quiet.

- where the natural surroundings retreat and the wanderings of the mind advance
 - an opportunity may arise to analyse your existence
 - science has shown that time in nature “slows down”, creating a happier brain.
-



*A wizard will wander, and
in his wanderings lies his
wisdom...*

Cultivating a healthy connection to
yourself within tends to promote a
healthier relationship with outer nature.

Similarly , nurturing a relationship with
outer nature manifests an inner sense
of humility, responsibility and gratitude.

Mind wandering

Mind wandering has been shown to occur in a region of the brain called the Default Mode Network (DMN - explained in 2022 workbook).

- The DMN is active whilst thinking about self, remembering the past, and planning the future.
- The DMN turns off when the mind is attentive on an external task

On a social level, the DMN is largely active during interpretations, intuition and inferences about others. It is therefore critical for empathy and social connection within our **community**.

Softening the grip of the ego

As we wander through nature, we wander through our mind. With the added catalyst of psilocybin, we can dissolve our ego during the task and explore our life meaning with less conditioned limitations and ego defence mechanisms.

The imagination brims with boundless creativity and curiosity, giving opportunity for a perspective shift on topics that are at the centre of attention.



Resilience

Many definitions...here are two

- "finding a positive outcome through adversity"
- "stable trajectory of healthy functioning after a highly adverse event"

To be resilient one must transcend the sense of "self"

-You are not the victim, it's just that "shit happens"

Healthy family and community environments allow a person's natural resilience mechanisms to evolve.



Resilience - Why are we interested?

- Everyone faces adversity
- How can we prepare for it?
- How can we gain strength?
- We can learn to adapt
- We can become better leaders
- We can teach others

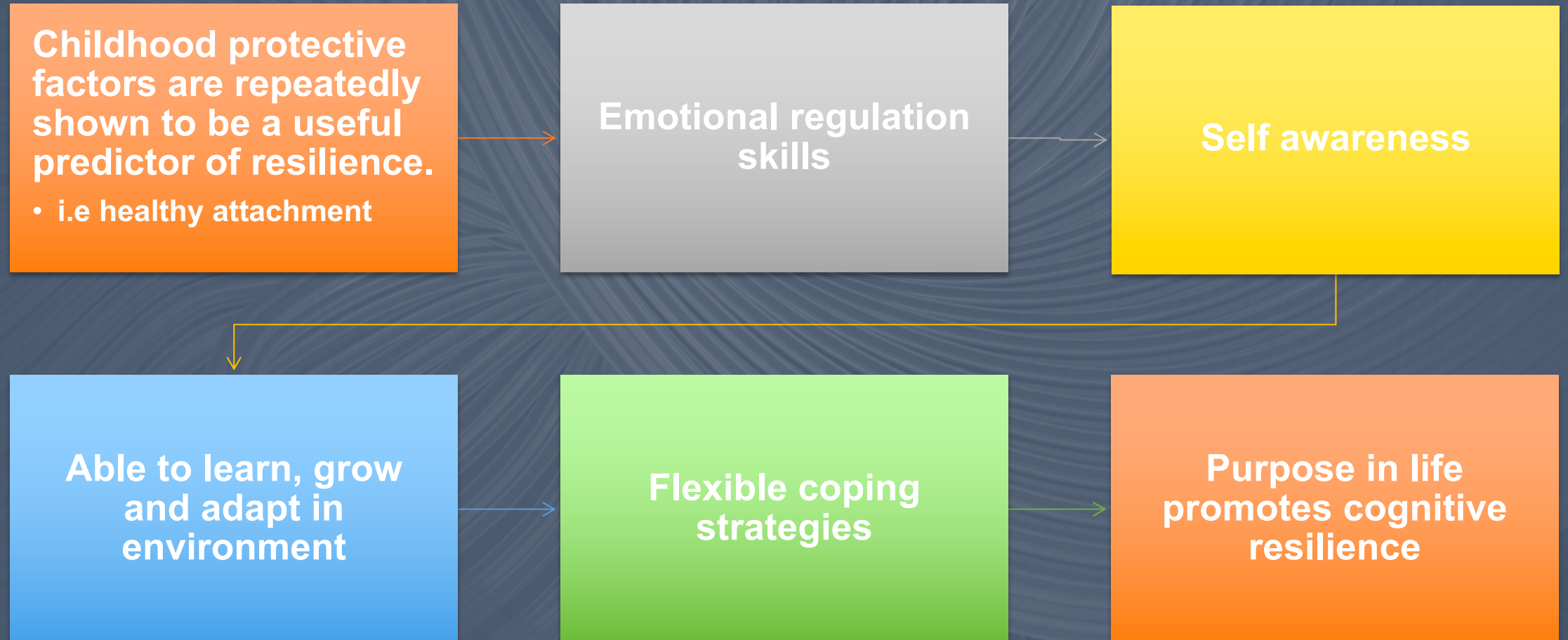




Factors determining resilience

- genetics and epigenetics
- psychological
- developmental
- cognitive
- neurochemical
- environmental

Predictors of resilience



Resilience and cold-water immersion

Cold water exposure

- Aids in fat conversion

 - To beneficial brown fat

- Produces nor-adrenaline

 - Reduces inflammation

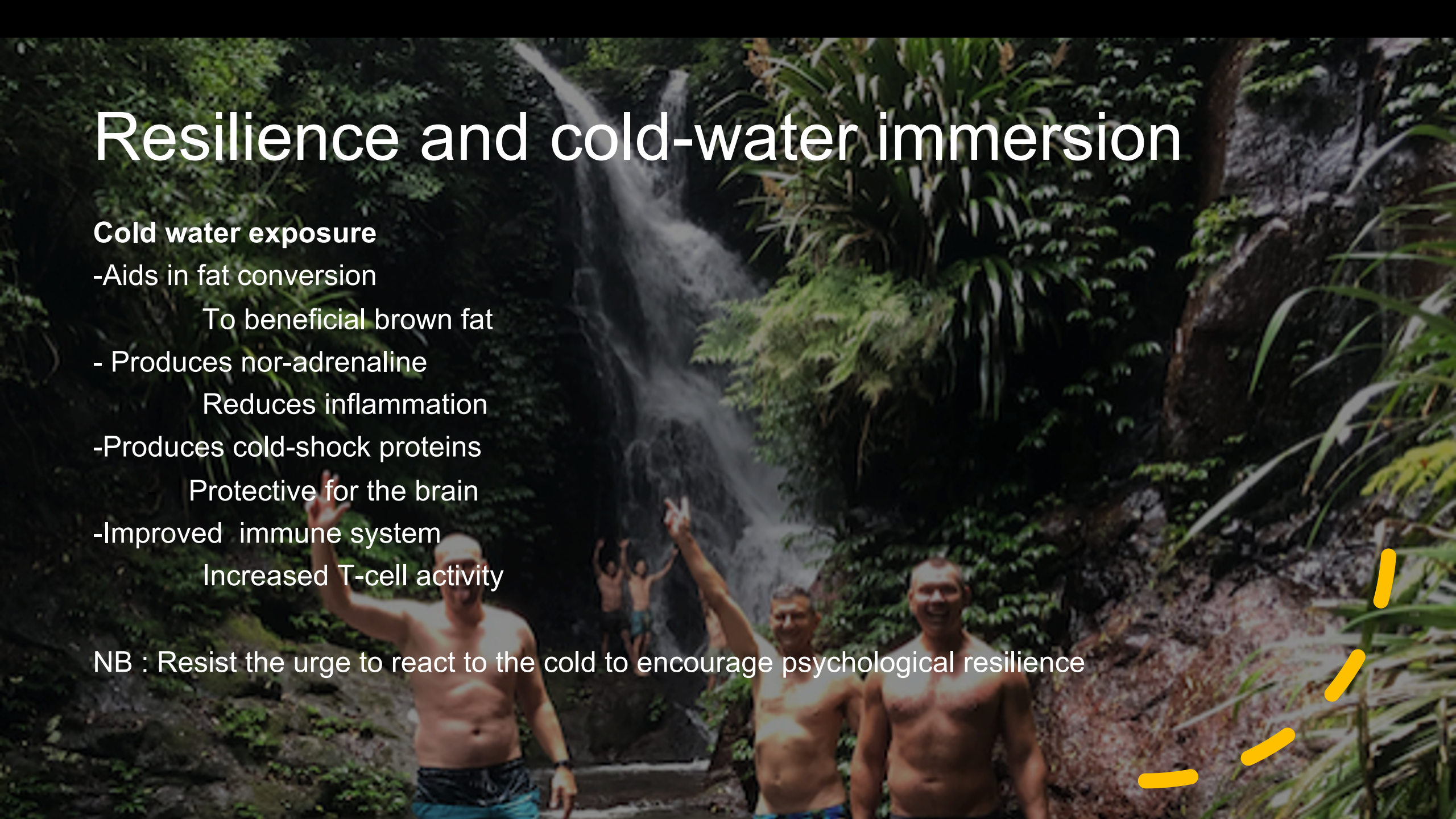
- Produces cold-shock proteins

 - Protective for the brain

- Improved immune system

 - Increased T-cell activity

NB : Resist the urge to react to the cold to encourage psychological resilience



Resilience and exercise

- Promotes testosterone and DHEA, both of which have been shown to be pro-resilient
- Increases antioxidants which help neutralize the byproducts of stress
- Improves neuro-chemistry in the brain to promote brain health
- Improve connection of pre-frontal lobe for emotional regulation





Leadership

The journey to leadership starts within.

High engagement in teams requires passion

- first of all, how do you motivate yourself?

Having empathy & compassion is key to forming teams.

Strong personal bonds = ability to take risk and aim high.

Not enough to just have BRAIN. Must also have HEART.

Resilience vs Hope

Grit > talent and I.Q. as a predictor of success

But beware the "burnout" – be able to manage stress

- - what are your coping strategies to re-set the mind?

Does resilience mean “enduring suffering”?

- - Sometimes, you must know when to quit
- - remember there are always new goals
- - have HOPE



Contribution

“If one really has a feeling of contribution, one will no longer have any need for recognition from others. Because one will already have the real awareness that “I am of use to someone,” without needing to go out of one’s way to be acknowledged by others.”

“The courage to be disliked” Authors: Kishimi and Koga

*A wizards' contribution is
worthy if he believes it so*

Contributing to the community is not
enough.

One must feel that their contribution is
worthy.

Happiness comes from giving.

The more you put in the more you get
out.



Community

- Shared values and core principles :
 - nature
 - mental and physical wellbeing
 - Camaraderie
- We evolve collaboratively.
- Our values guide us on our mission.
- The sense of “community” is not only about what the community means to you , but what “you” mean to the community.



Togetherness

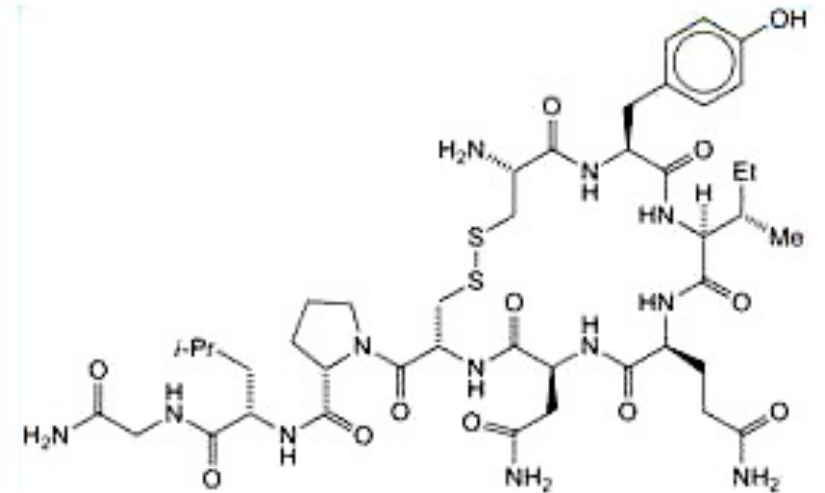


- By design, humans need to belong to survive.
 - No wonder community is so important.
- Attachment begins at birth. Oxytocin (a hormone) during labour drives the mother-infant bond.
- Attachment continues to be programmed by sensitive parenting through childhood.
- Which lays a foundation for social interaction as we mature.

Science of attachment : Oxytocin – the hug drug

Oxytocin is associated with trust, sexual arousal and relationships. Oxytocin :-

- Increases when you're hugging
- Improves the brain's ability to adapt
- Improves immune / decreases inflammation
- Improving gut health and microbiome
- Improves cardiovascular & metabolic function
- Particularly related to attachment experiences



Resilience by affiliation

Tolerance of hardship is achieved by social contact.

“Oxytocin induces a physiological state of quiescence that affords participation in the world without fear and stimulates the desire for social contact through its links with dopamine in striatal neurons.

This unique state provides the basis for the individual's sense of security upon which resilience can develop.” *Feldman, 2020*



The wizard thing
It's all just a bit of fun.

**BUT WE TAKE IT VERY
SERIOUSLY!**

Wizards...unite!

