

Why does it feel so good having a massage? What is it that creates that afterglow and gooey buzzing wellbeing? What if we could have it on tap?

A yoga teacher friend of mine exclaims "you gotta participate be receptive, open", when chatting about good massage treatment.

The answer is, oxytocin and yes, you can get it "on tap" in form of a spray. Tough that is not the best option in the long run.

Oxytocin was originally discovered in 1906 by a British scientist Henry Dale in connection with breast feeding and child birth and there it might be where most of our general knowledge and familiarity about it lays. More recently you might have come across oxytocin in popular referred to as the "love hormone" advocating hugging.

Research by Swedish scientist Kerstin Moberg Uvnäs over the last thirty years, confirms that oxytocin not a substance exclusive to mothers, but has much wider existence and importance as an ingenious substance in all humans as well as in animals.

It's primary function and existence is to create and aid our ability to bond and develop social ties. But it does have further additional functions that are rather incredible. Apart from a general sense of wellbeing it reduces fear and aggression, is relaxing and calming, increases pain threshold and deepens our relationship. Supports immune system, breathing, sleeping, wound healing. A long and impressive list of attributes.

Nature has given us the ability to produce this marvellous (but complex) substance released into our bloodstream when we touch or are being touched and even being in proximity with others that means us well will stimulate production. That explains the joy of good company. But our production capacity has individual variations, in some oxytocin flows easily and abundantly in others not so. Like everything else nature hands us from birth we have different predispositions but our life circumstances also plays a significant part in this instance.

The last bit here is crucial and why administering oxytocin as a bliss spray is not best option.

The missing component to experience self produced flow of oxytocin and wellbeing buzz is **trust**. **Trust** in being touched. **Trust** it is safe to be touched.

The 'formula' for wellbeing (and all benefits of oxytocin) is simply put:

Rubbing skin + **trust** = oxytocin production

You might have noted, if you still with me, that oxytocin also *increase* trust and a feeling of safety. It's there for us to strengthen the bonds between those who means us well, but not to be reckless and unbounded. It takes a building up to but in the long run preferred to encourage our own capacity gaining trust rather than override our natural abilities with an external administration, better stimulate our own production. Massage is fantastic and top choice but any body therapy are beneficial in encouraging the production, provided of course, the recipient feel safe and trust the therapist. The touching of soft materials, stroking animals, yoga, even singing in a group will also have a positive effect and can be a place to top up your oxytocin and could be a starting point to those who are not comfortable with touch.

I might be preaching to the converted here but it might be good to understand others reluctance and resistance to touch and how important it is to go easy, but also how beneficial it is.

Returning to my friend, who now have it worked out that for max benefit of massage she needs to open to receive. In other words to trust and the bliss will be there. This, I know was not always the case but rather developed over time.