

Dopamine Fasting

Psychology & Modern Life · BBC Reel

NAME _____

DATE _____

1. Speaking Warm-Up

Match the words to the images. Which would be hardest to give up? Discuss with your partner.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Which of the items above would be easiest to cut out of your life? Why these ones?
- 2 Which aspects are most problematic for you personally?
- 3 Are we responsible for our dopamine cravings, or is technology exploiting them?
- 4 Do we really have free will online, or are algorithms controlling us?
- 5 What would life be like if we got dopamine from real experiences, not screens?
- 6 Does constant pleasure make us less able to feel real happiness?
- 7 Who should manage dopamine addiction — individuals or society?

2. Vocabulary Bank — Addictions

Study these expressions for talking about addictions and dependencies. Use them in speaking activities.

COMMON EXPRESSIONS

to be hooked on
to be dependent on
to be attached to
to be into / really into
to enjoy sth excessively

LITERAL OPPOSITES

to be free from
to abstain from
to quit / give up
to kick the habit
to break free from

INFORMAL / SLANG

to be obsessed with
to be crazy about
can't get enough of
to be fixated on
to live for

FORMAL / CLINICAL

to be in recovery from
to be rehabilitated from
to maintain sobriety
to no longer depend on

SERIOUS / CLINICAL

to have a dependency on
to suffer from addiction to
to be enslaved by
to be consumed by

MILD / FIGURATIVE

to be fond of
to be keen on
to have a soft spot for
to use in moderation

3. Video

Watch: *What is Dopamine Fasting and is it good for you?* — BBC Reel

youtube.com/watch?v=7E8CPBzP1II

4. Listening — True or False?

Watch the video and decide whether each statement is True or False. Circle your answer.

- 1 Dopamine fasting involves avoiding electronics, food, and social interaction to reset the brain's reward system. T F
- 2 This practice has gained popularity among New York City executives. T F
- 3 Dopamine fasting is not about eliminating dopamine but about abstaining from activities that overstimulate the reward pathway. T F
- 4 Overconsumption of modern pleasures leads to desensitization and increased happiness. T F
- 5 Neuroscience shows that pleasure and pain are processed in the same brain regions; excessive pleasure-seeking leads to a painful comedown. T F
- 6 Many industries engineer their products to maximize dopamine release, making them highly addictive. T F
- 7 A 24-hour dopamine fast, done quarterly, helps individuals reflect, reset their minds, and gain insights about their lives. T F
- 8 Evolutionarily, our brains are wired for overabundance, not for scarcity. T F
- 9 In treating addiction, abstaining from a specific addictive behaviour for 10 days helps restore brain balance. T F
- 10 The best way to get dopamine sustainably is through effort-based activities like exercise, meditation, and heat exposure. T F

5. Multiple Choice — Choose the Correct Word

Choose the best word (A–D) to complete each sentence.

- 1 We live in an era of unprecedented _____, where an excess of material goods often leads to decreased happiness.

<p>(A) scarcity</p> <p>(C) abundance</p>	<p>(B) limitation</p> <p>(D) restriction</p>
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- 2 This phenomenon suggests we've reached a _____ point, where our brains are overwhelmed by readily available pleasures.

<p>(A) starting</p> <p>(C) breaking</p>	<p>(B) tipping</p> <p>(D) turning</p>
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- 3 The core idea behind dopamine fasting is to _____ from activities that trigger excessive dopamine release.

<p>(A) indulge</p> <p>(C) abstain</p>	<p>(B) engage</p> <p>(D) seek</p>
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4 Many individuals find themselves _____ on digital devices and social media, making this practice increasingly relevant.

(A) bored

(B) indifferent

(C) detached

(D) hooked

5 Our primitive brain wiring, designed for survival in a world of _____, struggles to adapt to constant gratification.

(A) plenty

(B) scarcity

(C) opportunity

(D) innovation

6 Psychiatrists often work with individuals suffering from _____ to various substances and behaviors.

(A) mild habits

(B) minor issues

(C) severe addictions

(D) casual interests

6. Key Vocabulary from the Video

TERM	POS	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
dopamine fasting	n	avoiding pleasure-inducing stimuli to reset the brain's reward system	Many people try dopamine fasting to regain focus.
consume / consumption	v/n	to use or eat something; the act of using or eating	We consume endless digital content every day.
release dopamine	phr	to trigger pleasure chemicals in the brain	Chocolate releases dopamine and makes us feel good.
reward pathway	n	brain system responsible for pleasure and motivation	Drugs hijack the brain's reward pathway.
overabundance	n	too much of something, an excessive amount	We live in an overabundance of digital entertainment.
unprecedented	adj	never seen or experienced before	We face unprecedented levels of stimulation today.
tipping point	n	a critical moment when a situation begins to change dramatically	We may be near a tipping point in our tech addiction.
downregulating	v/n	reducing sensitivity or activity in a biological system	Constant dopamine hits cause receptor downregulation.
neuroadaptation	n	the brain's adjustment to repeated stimuli, requiring more to feel the same	Neuroadaptation makes addicts need more to feel pleasure.
potent / potency	adj/n	strong, powerful; the strength or power of something	Nicotine is a highly potent substance.
engineered	adj	deliberately designed to produce a specific effect	Apps are engineered to keep users scrolling.
scarcity	n	lack or shortage of something	Dopamine evolved to help us survive during scarcity.
chronically tilted	adj	constantly imbalanced over a long period	Our brains are chronically tilted toward overstimulation.
abstain / abstinence	v/n	to refrain from doing something; the practice of refraining	He decided to abstain from social media for a month.
crave / craving	v/n	to desire something strongly; an intense desire	After quitting sugar, I still crave sweets.
productivity tool	n	something that helps one work more efficiently	My phone can be a productivity tool or a distraction.
self-exploration	n	the process of understanding oneself better	Meditation encourages self-exploration.
physiological	adj	related to the functions of the body	Stress affects our physiological responses.

TERM	POS	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
addictive behaviours	n	habits or actions that cause dependency	Online shopping can become an addictive behaviour.
restored balance	phr	regained stability or equilibrium	After a week offline, I felt my balance restored.

7. Vocabulary Gap-Fill

Use the clues to find the missing word(s) and complete each sentence.

1 Clue: m _ _ _ r _ / s _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ n

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2 Clue: d _ _ _ m _ _ _ fasting

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3 Clue: p _ _ _ _ _

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4 Clue: i _ _ _ _ _ _ _ themselves

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5 Clue: e _ _ _ _ _ _

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6 Clue: r _ _ _ _ _ pathway

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7 Clue: e _ _ _ _ _ _ _ s

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8 Clue: d _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ n

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9 Clue: t _ _ _ _ _ point

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10 Clue: s _ _ _ _ _

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11 Clue: e _ _ _ _ _ _

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12 Clue: a _ _ _ _ _

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13 Clue: o _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

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14 Clue: c _ _ _ _

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15 Clue: r _ _ _ _ _ _ balance

8. Translation — Polish → English

Translate the following sentences into English using vocabulary from this lesson.

1. Ludzie coraz częściej próbują 'postu dopaminowego', aby ograniczyć nadmierną stymulację.

2. W nowoczesnym świecie stała ekspozycja na bodźce cyfrowe przewyższa naturalną tolerancję mózgu.

3. Lekarze mogą zalecać odstawienie technologii, aby przywrócić równowagę psychiczną.

4. Uzależnienie od internetu prowadzi do izolacji i spadku potrzeby kontaktu społecznego.

5. Aplikacje są projektowane tak, by wywoływać maksymalną reakcję dopaminową.

6. Zbyt duża ilość bodźców cyfrowych może prowadzić do krytycznego punktu, w którym trudno zachować produktywność.

9. Speaking Vocabulary Revision

Use these 18 words in conversation. Tick each one off once you've used it.

 abundance

/əˈbʌn.dəns/ · noun

a very large quantity of something; more than enough

"We live in an era of abundance, yet many people feel less happy than ever before."

 abstain from sth

/əbˈsteɪn/ · verb

to deliberately avoid doing or having something

"He decided to abstain from social media for thirty days to reset his habits."

 potent

/ˈpəʊ.tənt/ · adjective

having a strong effect; powerful

"Modern cannabis is far more potent than it was fifty years ago."

 tipping point

/ˈtɪp.ɪŋ ˌpɔɪnt/ · noun

the moment when small changes become significant enough to cause larger change

"Society may have reached a tipping point where digital addiction is a public health crisis."

 fast

/fɑːst/ · verb

to go without food or certain activities for a period of time

"Some tech workers fast from all screens for one full day each week."

 pleasurable

/ˈpleɪ.ə.r.ə.bəl/ · adjective

giving a feeling of pleasure or enjoyment

"Scrolling feels pleasurable in the moment, but often leaves us feeling empty."

 tilt

/tɪlt/ · verb

to shift the balance towards one side

"Every time we seek pleasure, the brain's balance tilts, triggering a pain response."

 stimulating factors

/ˈstɪm.jʊ.leɪ.tɪŋ ˈfækt.əz/ · noun phrase

things that cause excitement or increased activity in the brain

"The modern world is full of engineered stimulating factors designed to capture attention."

 to kick the habit

/kɪk ðə ˈhæb.ɪt/ · idiom

to stop doing something that is a bad habit

"After years of compulsive scrolling, she finally managed to kick the habit."

 the lizard brain

/ðə ˈlɪz.əd breɪn/ · noun phrase

the primitive, instinctive part of the brain responsible for survival behaviours

"Our lizard brain is wired to seek pleasure regardless of long-term consequences."

 reset pathways

/ˌriːset ˈpɑːθ.weɪz/ · verb phrase

to restore the brain's neural circuits to a more balanced state

"A period of abstinence can reset pathways and reduce cravings significantly."

 severe addictions

/sɪˈvɪər əˈdɪk.ʃənz/ · noun phrase

serious, intense dependencies on substances or behaviours

"The psychiatrist treats patients with severe addictions to gambling and social media."

 crave

/kreɪv/ · verb

to have a very strong desire for something

"After a week of dopamine fasting, his body began to crave the quiet and simplicity."

 pursue

/pəˈsjuː/ · verb

to follow or chase something; to continue with determination

"Dopamine fasting gave her clarity to pursue a creative project she had been putting off."

 overabundance

/ˌəʊ.vər.əˈbʌn.dəns/ · noun

an excessively large amount of something

"The overabundance of entertainment options makes it harder to focus."

 world of scarcity

/wɜːld əv ˈskeər.si.ti/ · noun phrase

an environment where resources are limited and hard to obtain

"Our ancestors evolved in a world of scarcity, where finding food required real effort."

 neuroadaptation

/ˌnjuːr.əʊ.ə.dəpˈteɪ.ʃən/ · noun

the brain's process of adjusting to repeated stimuli

"Neuroadaptation explains why heavy social media users need more content to feel satisfied."

 evolutionary mismatch

/ˌiː.vəˈluː.ʃən.ər.i ˈmɪs.mætʃ/ · noun phrase

a conflict between the environment humans evolved for and the modern world

"Behavioural addictions are partly a product of evolutionary mismatch."

Answer Key

LISTENING T/F

1-T · 2-F · 3-T · 4-F · 5-T · 6-T · 7-T · 8-F · 9-F · 10-T

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1-C · 2-B · 3-C · 4-D · 5-B · 6-C

GAP-FILL ANSWERS

1-modern/stimulation · 2-dopamine · 3-prescribe · 4-isolating · 5-engineered · 6-reward · 7-executives · 8-downregulation · 9-tipping · 10-scarcity · 11-ecosystem · 12-abstain · 13-overabundance · 14-crave · 15-restored