

Watching Sad Movies Boosts Pain Tolerance

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. distressing /də'stresiNG/ (adjective) causing anxiety, sorrow or pain; upsetting.
Example: All I see on TV are distressing news.
2. tolerance /'təl(ə)rəns/ (noun) capacity to endure pain or hardship
Example: The desert camel shows the greatest tolerance to dehydration.
3. tragedy /'trædʒē/ (noun) an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress, such as a serious accident, crime, or natural catastrophe.
Example: The tragedy killed 100 people.
4. traumatic /trə'madik, trou'madik, trô'madik/ (adjective) emotionally disturbing or distressing
Example: Her experience was very traumatic.
5. threshold /'THreSH,(h)ôld/ (noun) an amount, level, or limit on a scale
Example: Her pain threshold is very low.



Watching sad movies can be just what the doctor ordered. A new study shows that watching **distressing** movies may boost our **tolerance** to pain. Researchers at Oxford University say that emotional movies can increase the amount of endorphins released by the brain. These are our body's natural painkillers - chemicals that relieve physical or psychological pain.

Dr Robin Dunbar explained that: "The emotional [distress] you get from **tragedy** triggers the endorphin system....The same areas in the brain that deal with physical pain also handle psychological pain."

Dr Dunbar and his colleagues conducted tests to find out the effect tragic stories have on us. One group of people in their experiment watched a **traumatic** drama about a disabled man battling homelessness, drugs and alcohol.

Another group watched a film on Britain's geology and archeology. On average, the pain tolerance of those who watched the drama increased by 13.1 percent, while the pain **threshold** for those who watched the documentary decreased by 4.6 percent. Dr Dunbar suggested one reason we like to watch sad movies is the natural high from the endorphins.

DISCUSSION

1. What do you do when you have pain?
2. What's the saddest movie you have ever seen?
3. Will you now watch a sad movie to relieve your pain?
4. Can music or gaming relieve pain?
5. Do you think reading a sad novel would also relieve pain?