

# How Listening Habits Can Affect Your Mood

By Jackie M. Jaloszynski, AuD

What is your favorite song? When people describe their favorite music, they often describe it as something which makes them happy, makes them smile, brings them comfort, brings back a memory—and these experiences are not reliant on any one type of music.

Researchers at the Montreal Neurological Institute had participants bring in their favorite music and looked at the emotional reaction of the participants to their music. The music genres ranged from classical to jazz to punk rock, and with so much variety in the music, the question became what was responsible for the emotional response in each individual to his or her music. The answer, as it turns out, is dopamine. Scientists have found a direct connection between the elation generated by music and the discharge of the neurotransmitter dopamine.

Dopamine is a chemical released in the brain which affects emotional regulation, pleasure and rewards. Richard Depue, professor at Cornell University, reports: "When our dopamine system is activated, we are more positive, excited and eager to go after goals or rewards, such as food, sex, money, education or professional achievements."

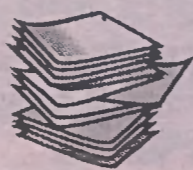
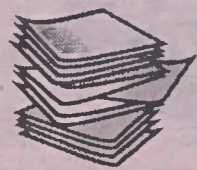
Let's revisit your favorite song. Has it ever given you "the chills" or produced a powerful emotional response? If so, you've just discovered one of the best ways to release more dopamine into your system, which is a brain hack for positivity and motivation.

So what type of music should you choose to realize these positive emotional responses? The key insight from the research described above is that it depends entirely on your preferences. The music can be happy, gloomy, upbeat, slow, instrumental, classical, rock or hip-hop. The secret is taking stock of the emotional reactions you receive from different songs and genres. Once you know how you react viscerally to a song, you can make use of this song to elicit the sought-after emotional reaction, producing the ideal emotional state for each scenario.

As an example, if heavy metal gets you pumped up and inspired during a gym session, you may want to listen to your favorite Metallica records while heading to the gym. On the other hand, if you are looking to unwind after a hectic day at the office, perhaps the best of Beethoven is the way to go.

And last, if you have hearing loss, consider that the latest hearing aid technology allows you to stream music wirelessly from portable devices directly to your hearing aids. Simply dial in your favorite songs on your phone or portable device, deliver it wirelessly to your hearing aids and let the dopamine start flowing. This puts you in a unique position to take advantage of the research.

*Dr. Jackie Jaloszynski, a private practice audiologist with over 35 years of experience, has lived on the Crystal Coast since 2015, operating Crystal Coast Hearing Solutions, Inc. in Morehead City. She is licensed with the American Speech Language and Hearing Association and the North Carolina Board of Examiners in Audiology, and believes that education is the key to people successfully using hearing aids. The material here is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Dr. Jaloszynski can be reached at 222-5256 or ears@crystalcoasthearing.com.*



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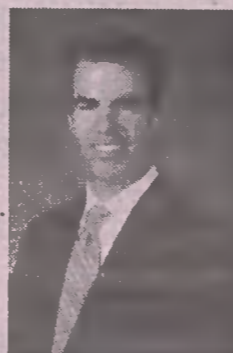


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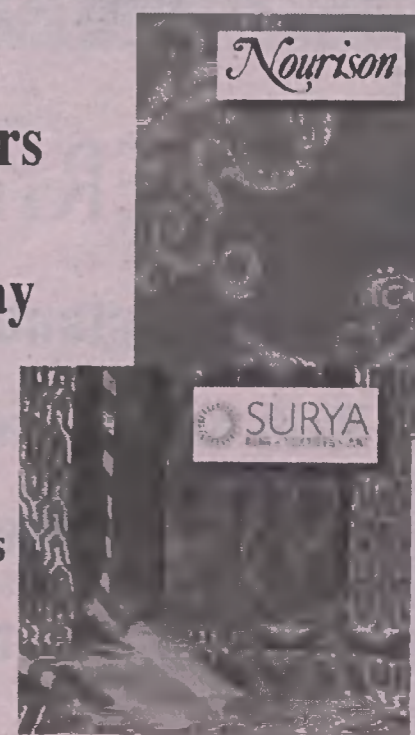
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