

# Ripped From the Headlines

What did these recent psychological research studies find?

## Expressing ? Is Linked To A Healthier Heart, Study Finds

**Gratitude** doesn't just warm your heart, it may also lead to a healthier one, a new study suggests.

Patients with asymptomatic heart failure showed decreased levels of inflammatory biomarkers in the body, which are related to improved cardiac health. The study consisted of 186 men and women who kept a gratitude journal for eight weeks as they received regular clinical care.

"It seems that a more grateful heart is indeed a more healthy heart, and that gratitude journaling is an easy way to support cardiac health," wrote lead author Paul J. Mills, Ph.D., professor of family medicine and public health at the University of California, San Diego.

The study also found that gratitude contributed to spiritual well-being, which was associated with improved mood and better sleep.

## A ? Personality Can Help Get Original Ideas Noticed

**Disagreeable** innovators ranging from Thomas Edison to Steve Jobs have helped propagate the idea that being headstrong and aggressive may be linked with creative genius. After all, creative success isn't just about coming up with an innovative idea — you also have to convince others to get behind your idea, and this is where researchers find that being a jerk may help.

Psychological scientists Samuel Hunter and Lily Cushenbery warn that while being aggressive may have benefits in some contexts, it's not a guaranteed strategy for promoting creativity.

"Although disagreeability appears to be generally unrelated to who has original ideas (e.g., idea generation), such qualities may indeed help with the inherent biases of getting original ideas heard and used by others," the researchers write in the *Journal of Business Psychology*.

## Older Workers Possess Unique Cognitive ?

The **cognitive strengths** of older workers have been highlighted by recent research. One study found that some components of intelligence peak even as late as our 60s or 70s. Psychological scientists Joshua Hartshorne and Laura Germine gathered a vast trove of data through websites [gameswithwords.org](http://gameswithwords.org) and [testmybrain.org](http://testmybrain.org). The dataset showed different cognitive skills peak at different ages. For example, information processing speed peaked relatively early in life.

But we do not hit our peak for some cognitive skills until our 40s, 50s, or early 70s. For example, the ability to accurately evaluate people's emotions, an important job skill for many professions, seems to peak in our 40s or 50s. Crystallized intelligence skills peak much later in life: Vocabulary skills peaked in people in their late 60s and early 70s. These results should be used by employers to help them avoid discrimination based on age.

# RESEARCH IN ACTION!

## WHAT DID THESE RECENT PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH STUDIES FIND?

CROWS WILL  ? BUT ONLY FOR A BETTER QUALITY REWARD

### Delay Gratification

Corvids - A family of birds including Crows and Ravens - are capable of forgoing an immediate reward in favor of a better one after a delay period.

However, a recent study by Hillermann et.al in 2014 found that corvids will delay instant gratification for an immediate reward only when the delayed reward is of better quality not quantity. In other words, they will wait for better, not more!

CONSUMING  ? IS LINKED TO BETTER COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

### Chocolate

Much is known about the physical health benefits of cocoa and chocolate- specifically its cardiovascular benefits - yet not much is known about what chocolate can do for the mind.

Psychologists Georgina Crichton, Merrill Elias, and Ala Alkerwi conducted a longitudinal study testing the long term cognitive benefits of chocolate. They monitored 968 participants between the ages of 23-98 over the course of 21 years (1995-2016). They found - with moderate chocolate consumption - participants showed significant cognitive improvements.

THERE IS A CORRELATION BETWEEN  ? AND PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

### Spicy Foods

Some people tend to have a higher craving and tolerance for spicy foods than others, but why is that? A 2015 study by Nadia Byrnes suggests that different personality characteristics are linked to an appreciation of spicy foods. In particular she discovered different personality traits drive men and women towards hotter foods.

For women, those with higher Sensation Seeking were more likely to enjoy spicier foods. For men, higher Sensitivity to Reward was linked to the intake of spicy foods. Essentially, women like it hot for the thrill, men for the social status!