

Bad Boss? Say Cheese, Please.

If you have a boss who's making your life miserable, new neuroscience suggests that you should eat more cheese.

Gallop (Polls) conducted a recent survey on one million U.S. workers and discovered that the number one reason people quit their jobs is because of a "bad boss." The bad boss dilemma is becoming so common in most organizations that it's almost reaching epidemic proportions. A recent *Harris Interactive* study shows that 21% of workers are planning to find new jobs this year, and more than a third of those cite a bad boss as the reason.

CBS News reported that, "More than eight [out of] ten employees believe that their relationship with their direct supervisor has a big impact on how happy they are with their job."

What most of us may not realize is that our diets may have a profound impact on our working and personal relationships, and more cheese could actually lead to more smiles in our day. Leading neuroscientists now know that our personalities are directly related to three primary neurotransmitters.

Neurotransmitters are chemicals that modulate brain activity in predictable patterns and dictate how we humans act and react to the world around us. In other words, they determine our personalities and affect the quality of our relationships.

The three primary neurotransmitters are Dopamine, Serotonin, and Norepinephrine. Dopamine is a basic modulator of physical endurance or drive, serotonin of psychological well-being, and norepinephrine of focused thinking and mental drive.

Our neurotransmitter chemical levels are either high, medium, or low, and those levels can be directly affected by our diets. If our levels are out of balance, we can get grumpy, miserable, angry, tired, and unproductive. For example, a serotonin deficiency can cause migraine headaches, nausea, appetite issues, depression, and anxiety. Also, drinking too much coffee can lower our dopamine levels and make us feel unhappy.

How can cheese make us feel happy and improve our relationships? Certain quality cheeses, like a mouth-watering manchego or tongue-tingling cheddar, are filled with tyrosine. Since our bodies are incapable of manufacturing this amino acid, most of us have low levels and need frequent “boosts.”

A section of our brain called the olfactory bulb contains an enzyme that reacts with tyrosine to form neurotransmitters, including—you guessed it—norepinephrine and dopamine. The former helps fight depression and the latter activates pleasurable feelings from certain activities, like eating.

Our sense of smell is also located in the olfactory bulb, which is related to the limbic system (our middle brain). We now know that this part of our brain triggers emotional responses such as happiness and sadness. Cheese presses our limbic happy button and makes us smile.

Cheese makes everyone smile, you might say, but it also makes everyone fat. Sure, if you eat a whole pound of Brie or Havarti with every meal you'll soon look like the cow from whence the cheese came, but moderate amounts are actually healthy.

Cheese is made from milk, which is almost 90% water, and contains significant amounts of minerals and proteins. Aged cheese has very little lactose and is essentially

concentrated milk, but delivered in a healthy “predigested” form. Most importantly, cheese contains tyrosine.

Have you ever bit into a genuine Parmigiano-Reggiano or Dutch farmhouse Gouda and marveled at the crunchy bits that taste like salt? Those are actually little crystals of tyrosine inside long casein molecule amino acid chains.

That tongue-tying sentence basically means that cheese, when eaten in moderation, is the ultimate feel-good food that can make you happy. When you’re happier, your relationships improve and your boss is less irritating. So cheese is not only healthy, but might actually help you get a raise...or at least keep you from getting fired.



William Craig Reed is the bestselling author of [*Bad Boss*](#), an eBook embedded inside a mobile application that uses neuroscience to match your Neuron-Profile to that of your Boss to provide a personalized instruction manual on how to dramatically improve your working and personal relationships. www.wcraigreed.com.

William Craig Reed is the author of the non-fiction book *Red November: Inside the Secret U.S. – Soviet Submarine War* (HarperCollins, 2010) and *The Eagle and the Snake: A SEAL Team Six Interactive Thriller*. Reed is also the co-author of *Tarzan, My Father* with the late Johnny Weissmuller, Jr. Reed served as a U.S. Navy diver, submarine weapons technician, and espionage photographer for special operations aboard nuclear fast-attack submarines. Reed earned commendations for completing secret

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When not writing, Reed is a partner in Aventi Group—a technology marketing consulting firm with clients that include Apple, Adobe, HP, SAP, and VMware. Reed holds an MBA in Marketing and was a former vice president and board director for the Silicon Valley American Marketing Association.