

**What Can Lizards Teach Us About
Happiness?**

INTRETIPITY

Rachael Mattison

New York, NY

WE ALL
HAVE THIS
TENDENCY
TO DO WHAT
WE DON'T
WANT TO DO
AND WE ARE
POWERLESS
ABOUT
CERTAIN
BEHAVIORS.

WE TEND TO REACT BEFORE THINKING WHEN WE ENCOUNTER

Humans have a wild animal brain, a lizard brain, it's been around for longer and works much quicker than the other part of our brain, that communicates, does ballet, etc. Lizard Brian is right next to our spinal cord, and floods chemicals instantly, but the front part of our brain takes 3 more seconds to catch up, and by the time it catches up it's much harder to calm down here's the right answer.

The fear won't go away especially if we want it to... think of it as "I feel this AND here's what I'm going to do about it. V.s. I feel this but I am unable to move on.

"Learn to dance with it."

WE NEED OUR HIPPOCAMPUS

On September 1, 1953, time stopped for Henry Molaison. For roughly 10 years, the 27-year-old had suffered severe seizures. By 1953, they were so debilitating he could no longer hold down his job as a motor winder on an assembly line. On September 1, Molaison allowed surgeons to remove a thumb-sized section of tissue from each side of his brain. It was an experimental procedure that he and his surgeons hoped would quell the seizures wracking his brain.

And, it worked. The seizures abated, but afterwards Molaison was left with permanent amnesia. He could remember some things but he was unable to form new memories. If he met someone who then left the room, within minutes he had no recollection of the person or their meeting. What was a tragedy for Molaison led to one of the most significant turning points in 20th century brain science: the understanding that complex functions such as learning and memory are tied to discrete regions of the brain.

In 1955, scientists William Beecher Scoville and Brenda Milner began studying Molaison — referred to as H.M. to protect his privacy — and nine other patients who had undergone similar surgery. Only patients who had specific portions of their medial temporal lobes removed experienced memory problems. And, the more tissue removed, the more severe the memory impairment. The researchers noted patients' amnesia was "curiously specific to the domain of recent memory."

Scoville and Milner's observations pointed to a particular structure within the medial temporal lobe that was necessary for normal memory — the hippocampus. Over the next five decades, neuroscientists studying Molaison learned that the hippocampus and adjacent regions transform our transient perceptions and awareness into memories that can last a lifetime.

For Molaison, this transformation could no longer take place. He experienced every aspect of his daily life — eating a meal, taking a walk — as a first. Yet his intellect, personality, and perception were intact.

Studies of Molaison paved the way for further exploration of the brain networks encoding conscious and unconscious memories.

FEARS LEAD US TO GROWTH

So if H.M. was not able to formulate new memories, was he able to formulate fears, essential fear is being anxious about something happening in the future. "Fear can impair formation of long-term memories and cause damage to certain parts of the brain, such as the hippocampus. This can make it even more difficult to regulate fear and can leave a person anxious most of the time. To someone in chronic fear, the world looks scary and their memories confirm that."

His story stimulated many thoughts about fear and what would happen if my fears, or everyone's fears just disappeared... how would the world be? Fears are a part of being human, and without them we would never learn to overcome them and grow.

*What can lizards
teach us about
happiness?*

For Myself

or anyone who needs it

intREtiPiTy

Written and Illustrated by
Rachael Mattison

TRYPOPHOBIA:

Fear of Tiny Holes.

Trypophobia is an aversion to the sight of irregular patterns or clusters of small holes or bumps. It is not officially recognized as a mental disorder, but may be diagnosed as a specific phobia if excessive fear and distress occur. People may express only disgust to trypophobic imagery.

THALASSOPHOBIA:

~~Fear of~~ The Ocean.

Thalassophobia (Greek: θάλασσα, thalassa, "sea" and φόβος, phobos, "fear") is an intense and persistent fear of the sea or of sea travel.

Thalassophobia can include fear of being in large bodies of water, fear of the vast emptiness of the sea, of sea waves, and fear of distance from land. Thalassophobia is different from aquaphobia because while aquaphobia is the fear of water itself, thalassophobia is a fear of bodies of water that appear vast, dark, deep, and dangerous.

ACROPHOBIA:

Fear of High Open Spaces. Acrophobia is an extreme or irrational fear or phobia of heights, especially when one is not particularly high up. It belongs to a category of specific phobias, called space and motion discomfort, that share both similar causes and options for treatment.

Most people experience a degree of natural fear when exposed to heights, known as the fear of falling. On the other hand, those who have little fear of such exposure are said to have a head for heights. A head for heights is advantageous for those hiking or climbing in mountainous terrain and also in certain jobs such as steeplejacks or wind turbine mechanics. People with acrophobia can experience a panic attack in high places and become too agitated to get themselves down safely.

Approximately 2-5% of the general population has acrophobia, with twice as many women affected as men.[1] The term is from the Greek: ἄκρον, ákron, meaning "peak, summit, edge" and φόβος, phóbos, "fear".

MR. LIZARD:

The lizard comes into the plot in different forms, but the lizard is never actually, physically there. The characters hallucinate the lizard to indicate the lack of their 'lizard brain' aka. Limbic System working, because fear is invisible; we cannot physically grab fear by the balls, it is all mental.

[illegible]

INT:APARTMENT

EXT: BROOKLYN

TRYPOPHOBIA

Yo, I'm hungry lets get tacos.

ACROPHOBIA

Yeah me too. Lets GO.

THALASSOPHOBIA

ight, the place on Grand?

TRYPHOBIA

Yessssssssssssss.

[THEY ALL EXIT APARTMENT AND WALK TOWARDS TACO
PLACE ON GRAND ST, BROOKLYN.]

INT. SPECIAL TACO RESTAURAUNT:

EXT. BROOKLYN:

[THEY ALL ORDER THREE TACOS,
POLLO, TINGA, AND THE
SPECIAL.{The special taco had a
special mushroom in it that intoxicated all
three of them for 72 hours. They have no anx-
iety or fear. But they can only formaulate new
memories (short term
memory) for 30 minutes.]

[ENJOYING EATING TACOS.]

TRYPHOBIA

BRO THESE TACOS SMACKKKKK.

[EXIT TACO'S PROJECT.]

EXT WALKING ON GRAND ST, BROOKLYN.

Yo, I'm hungry lets get
tacos.
EXIT TACO RESTAURANT.

ACROPHOBIA
WALKING ON GRAND ST,
~~Yeah me too. Lets GO.~~

TRYPHOBIA
BRO THESE TACOS SMACKKK-
ight, the place on Grand?
~~EXIT TACO'S PROJECT.~~

TRYPHOBIA
WALKING ON GRAND ST,
BRO THESE TACOS SMACKKKKK.
Yessssssssssss.

I'm hungry lets get
tacos.

They are intoxicated
by the shrooms in the
special taco.

ACROPHOBIA
Yeah me too. Lets GO.
Yo, I'm hungry lets get ta-
cos.

They can only
remember new
information for 30
minutes, they have no
sense of fear or
anxiety, and they
have hallucenatons.

THALASSOPHO-
EXIT TACO'S PROJECT.
ACROPHOBIA
Yeah me too. Lets GO.
WALKING ON GRAND ST, BROOKLYN.
TRYPHOBIA
THALASSOPHO-
ight, the place on Grand?
Yessssssssssss.

TRYPHOBIA
Yessssssssssss.

STILL EATING TACOS:

[They all ate 16 tacos because they could not
remember that they had just had tacos.]

ACROPHOBIA

God I FEEL SICK

THALASSOPHOBIA

Let's go get some ***PEPTOBISMAL***

[EXIT TACO RESTAURANT FOR GOOD THIS TIME.]

EXT. BROOKLYN:

[THEY ALL WALK UP TO A SHELL GAS STATION TO GET
PEPTOBISMAL and there's a creepy-ass m.f. car
chillin' in the lot.]

INT. SHELL GAS STATION PARKING LOT:

EXT. BROOKLYN:

[Kidnapper comes up behind TRYPHOBIA.]

KIDNAPPER

LETSGOGETINTHECAR NOW

TRYPHOBIA

iiiight... who are you though?

Kidnapper mute.

[They all get into the kidnappers car because they have no sense of fear, and do not sense the danger.]

[kidnapper is connnnnnnnfused.... but goes along with it.]

[EXIT SHELL GAS STATION.]

EXT. LEAVING BROOKLYN GOING INTO QUEENS:

INT. KIDNAPPERS CAR:

[The KIDNAPPER is now driving into long island.]

[They all begin hallucinating the driver
(kidnapper) as a lizard.]

ACROPHOBIA

uhhhhhh... ? why are you a lizard
driving a car?

...

wait where are we?

THALASSOPHOBIA

Yeah WHAtTHEFUCK how did we GETH-
ere.. ??

[Kidnapper extremely confused and uncomfortable.]

***Y'ALL'RE
WEIRD AS
FULCK***

***GET
THE
FULCK
OUT***

EXT. LONG ISLAND:

INT. ON SIDE OF ROAD:

[They all get out of the kidnapper's car.]

ACROPHOBIA

Yo where the fuck are we??

TRYPHOBIA

How did we get here... ?

THALASSOPHOBIA

I don't know man... y'all
hungry?

TRYPHOBIA & ACROPHOBIA

Yeahhhhhhhhhhhhhh

ACROPHOBIA

All I see is a damn stripmall...

THALASSOPHOBIA

[Reading the store fronts.]

Nails-hair salon- deli- bagels-auto-
shop- Fuck man all I want is some
tacos...

TRYPHOBIA

Yeah who the hell would want a
bagel at wait

what

what

time

is

it ?

[STILL ON SIDE OF ROAD IN LONG ISLAND.]

[2010 HONDA CIVIC WITH SURFBOARD STRAPPED TO TOP ZOOMS
PAST THEM.]

THALASSOPHOBIA

YO what the hell that car had a
surfboard ? where the

[All look extremely confused and dazed.]

[THALASSOPHOBIA starts walking in direction of the
2010 Honda Civic.]

TRYPHOBIA
where are you going???

[THALASSOPHOBIA does not respond, keeps walking.]

ACROPHOBIA
Ugh, fuck it.

[ACROPHOBIA starts walking towards THALASSOPHOBIA.]

[They all are now walking towards the direction of the
2010 Honda Civic.]

[TURN DOWN A ROAD IN PATCHOGUE, LONG ISLAND NY.]

[They all see a sign that shows directions to the Fire Island Ferry.]

THALASSOPHOBIA

OH my FUCK WERE IN LONG ISLAND.

ACROPHOBIA

how the helllllll did we get here!!!!

? ?

TRYPHOBIA

I'm just so confused..

THALASSOPHOBIA

Y'all wanna like go t to the beach?

[They all start walking towards the Fire Island Ferry.]

[They get on the Ferry to go to the beach.]

EXT. FIRE ISLAND BAY:

INT: ON FIRE ISLAND FERRY:

[All three are sitting on the top deck of the ferry.]

ACROPHOBIA

Hol up.. why are we on a ferry?
how'd we get here..???

THALASSOPHOBA

Where are we?

LADY ON FERRY

KiDZ dEW yE WONT yE SWEtAA?

ACROPHOBIA

Fuck we're in Long Island.

EXT. FIRE ISLAND LONG ISLAND NEW YORK:

[They all exit the ferry.]

* * *

EXT. ON THE BEACH:

[They all just stare at the beach and everyone on it
for about 40 minutes.]

THALASSOPHOBIA

ight... when the fuck did we get on
this beach like uh
how'd we fuckin' get here.

BY THE SHORE ON THE BEACH

[They are all walking along the shore, confused as hell, and they run into the 2010 honda civic surfer.]

SURFER

YOOO! I saw you guys on the road!
What's good you guys seem hella
chill wanna go on my dad's speed
boat??????

TRYPHOBIA

Who the fuck are you?

ACROPHOBIA

What??? like how when did we ?
where??

[THALASSOPHOBIA turns to his ACROPHOBIA AND
TRYPHOBIA.]

THALASSOPHOBIA

yaaaallllllllll! Let's go that seems
dope

[They all start walking with surfer towards the dock.]

EXT. FIRE ISLAND BAY:

INT. ON SPEED BOAT:

[THE WIND IS BLASTING IN THEIR EARS AND HAIR FLYING
EVERYWHERE.]

SURFER DAD

DON'T TURN YER HEADS YE SHADES WILL
GO FLYEN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

ACROPHOBIA, THALASSOPHOBIA, &
NTRYPHOBIA

OKAY.

* * *

HOW

THE

FUCK

DID WE GET FONT

THIS

DAMN

BOAT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN:

INT. CLUB:

[MUSIC BLASTING IN THE CLUB.]

TRYPOPHOBIA

YOOOOOOO HOW THE FUCKKK DID WE GET
IN THIS CLUB???!!!!!! LIKE WHEN THE
FUCK DID WE GET HERE?????!!!!

[They all hallucinate everyone in the club as
lizards.]

ACROPHOBIA

YEAH! I DON'T KNOW HOW WE GOT HERE I'M
JUST AS CONFUSED ...

IDK WJAYS GOIN ON
WHYYYYYYY WE IN THA CLUB RN ..??

TRYPOPHOBIA

IDK Y'ALL HUNGRY??

INT. IN CORNER OF CLUB:

[They all move to the corner of the club so they
can fucking hear each other.]

TRYPOPHOBIA

I'm mad hungry.. are you guys?

THALASSOPHOBIA

yes brother let's get mutha fuckin'
tacos and go the fuck home.

ACROPHOBIA

iiiiiiight yeah lets leave.

[They all exit the club.]

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN STREETS:

[They're all walking to go get tacos, still intoxicated.]

INT. TACO STAND:

[Eating tacos.]

[They are all silent because they are exhausted.]

[Exit taco stand.]

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN STREETS:

[They all walk towards the subway to go home.]

INT. SUBWAY STATION:

TRYPOPHOBIA

What... what fucking day is it??

ACROPHOBIA

I honestly do not know, I do not really care right now, i just want to be in the cozy ass lil ass bed.

THALASSOPHOBIA

Where are we coming from? like we're going home but I have no idea where we just were? Did we like black out and go into a coma and just get outta the hospital??? whaAT THE FUCK THERE'S A FUCKING LIZARD??????
WHY IS THERE A LIZARD IN THE SUBWAY
THIS IS NEW YORK I I CAN'T EVEN
HANDLE RATS WHAT THE FUCK-

[Subway train comes by and mr. lizard disappears.]

INT. SUBWAY CART:

THALASSOPHOBIA

Y'all see that shit??

ACROPHOBIA

I'm asleep don't talk to me.

TRYPOPHOBIA

I don't know I was too disgusted by the fucking smell of the god damn

EXT. STREETS^{City} IN BROOKLYN:

[They all walk home.]

ACROPHOBIA

ight. goodnight y'all I'm mad tired.

Author's Note:

This story was very important to me because I realized through the process of developing my ideas for this book, that I had been a victim of my own fears. I was holding myself back because of anxiety. Recently, I've learned to deal with and overcome them. Through research on psychology of fear I discovered the patient H.M. I was inspired by his story, and thought about what life would be like if we had our fears removed, and came to the conclusion that fears are essential because when we realize them, deal with them, and overcome them we grow.

The plot is also a reflection of very significant places in my life ex: I eat tacos at this place in Brooklyn about once a week (lol), I have family in Long Island, I love them dearly but they are characters. My Aunt Donna is constantly asking if anyone needs anything, my Uncle Jimmy owns a boat hauling business in Long Island (his speed boat is his baby), and my cousin Josh used to surf in Fire Island and drove an old ass Honda Civic. He now lives in a van in New Zealand - complete hippie- completely different than the rest of his family.

ight that's it. Lizard Brain Bitch!

