

Dear Students,

Imagine if listening to rock music on an iPod could activate neural stem cells and cure a brain disease. This is what I thought about while visiting a young man in a nursing home who had Huntington disease.

My patient, Stuart, was unable to speak, and could barely move. HD typically causes just the opposite - uncontrollable, dancelike movements - but if a person survives long enough, the body simply runs out of energy. That's what happened to Stuart. So when I visited, I would play tunes on my iPod, creating playlists to tell stories. At the time I was writing articles about stem cells, and began to fantasize that the music - the arpeggios of U2, Coldplay, and the Killers - could turn on the sleeping stem cells in Stuart's brain, and cure him. I sent the idea to a competition for scientists to attend film school at the American Film Institute. I got in and learned to write screenplays, but the story unfolded better in novel form. All the science is accurate - except for the one tweak of music activating stem cells.

You can read more at <http://www.trafford.com/07-2401>, or enter *Stem Cell Symphony* into amazon.com. Please e-mail me if you'd like a copy at lower cost - and tell me a little about yourself and why you are studying human genetics.

I like to think that what I've imagined could, and will, actually happen --- that we can reawaken the stem cells dormant in our own bodies to heal.

Best wishes,

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