

Additional Try It Yourself Exercises Chapter 2

Try It Yourself

Imagine this: Your employer, the head of a drug company, has given you the assignment of finding new psychoactive drugs. What kinds of psychoactive drugs would you want to search for? Drugs to relieve pain, depression or other disorders? Or would you focus on drugs to enhance intellectual performance and memory? Do you believe that drugs should be used only to treat problems, or to enhance life? Why?

Now imagine this: You have been a little tired lately. Your physician offers you a medication that will alleviate your fatigue, but it might also increase your appetite leading you to eat more and gain weight. Would you accept the drug? What if your fatigue had been severe? Would you accept the drug then? What if the side effects included irritability and loss of patience? Would you accept the drug now? How severe do the psychological effects of a medication have to be to make you refuse it? Is the price worth it, or should drug companies be prohibited from marketing drugs that have psychological side effects?

Try It Yourself

For many of us, a single cup of coffee in the morning isn't enough to get us started. For others, a single cup of tea (which contains less caffeine) does the trick. Similarly, some people find that a cigarette (nicotine) is helpful in calming down, while for other people, several cigarettes may be needed to have the desired effect. If you use caffeine or nicotine, how much do you require to achieve the desired effect? Do you think this might mean that you have developed a tolerance for the drug? Does this change your feeling about using the drug?

Try It Yourself

An old saying suggests that 'laughter is the best medicine.' The role of humour in dealing with stress is well known; in fact, over 40% of people use humour to deal with stress (McCrae 1984). Do you find yourself using this technique? Given your observations and the current knowledge of psychoimmunology, do you think humour is the 'best medicine'? Do you see any practical way to apply this idea to your own life? Are there times when humour might increase stress? For example, would it increase or decrease your stress if your instructor put a joke at the beginning of each examination, or if your boss started his/her proficiency evaluation of you with a joke? Ask your friends if they would respond the same way you do.