

INSIDE YOUR BRAIN

GF feature

All you ever wanted to know about how that thing in your head works.

The guy you're into says "hi" and you're completely lost for words. Weird, right? Well – there's actually a legit explanation for crazy behaviour like this and it's all to do with your brain. To understand more about what exactly is going on in your head when you fall in love and in other situations, brain expert Nicola Morgan, author of *Blame My Brain: The Amazing Teenage Brain Revealed* lets us know what's up.

YOUR BRAIN IN LOVE

When you start crushing hard on someone, it literally becomes difficult to think clearly. Studies have shown the frontal cortex – the decision-making part of your brain – is suspended a little when you are around someone you really like. That's why you feel like doing crazy stuff around your crush! "There's a much stronger emotional drive and a weaker control centre – the part of the brain that would say, hang on a minute, this might not be such a good idea," says Nicola. You can thank that control centre for the intense feels after a break-up, too!

YOUR BRAIN WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Find yourself changing around certain people? Yup, that's your brain! "There's a strong evolutionary drive to do whatever it takes to [fit in]," Nicola says. So when a friend is all, "Let's do this really dodgy thing!" your brain is totally in on it. The best way to think clearly? Before you do something crazy that a friend suggests, just take a couple of seconds to stop and think before you do it. Is the risk too high? What are the chances you're gonna get hurt?

YOUR BRAIN WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED

Intense sitches like getting into an argument with your mum or having exams are so overwhelming coz the teen brain feels stress more than an adult, according to Nicola. It all comes down to thinking ahead. "It's really hard for you to think about the future. It goes back to the emotional part of the brain being more developed than the control centre." Take time out in stressy situations and put the drama into perspective. Is this a huge problem?

YOUR BRAIN WHEN YOU'RE TIRED

Weird fact – according to Nicola, the sleep hormone in the brain (melatonin) actually doesn't switch on until about 11pm in the teen brain. That's why you might find yourself TRYING to go to sleep early – but you can't seem to! "What you need to do is trick your brain into thinking it's later than it actually is," says Nicola. Make your room really dark and turn off your screens an hour before you go to bed.

GET DECISIVE!

Ever opened a menu and gone, "Whoa, gonna need hours to work out which is the best dinner for me?" This is the easy-peasy guide for you. According to Life Hacker, you can:

PRETEND YOU'RE ADVISING A FRIEND: Only works in certain sitches, but it can give you the perspective you need.

RESTRICT YOURSELF: Information overload is def a thing. If you're making a small decision, such as what food to order, try limiting your decision-making time to two minutes.

CHALLENGE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS: Playing devil's advocate with yourself can get you out of a rut.