



The Non-Science Analogy

One challenge frequently faced by scientists is how to explain their work in a way that's accessible to a wide audience. You can always get more technical, but if you start off too technical, your audience will tune out before you even get going. So, work on creating an analogy for your research that doesn't involve *ANY* scientific terminology. Here's an example:

- Scientific field of study – cocaine and dopamine transporter function.
- Non-science analogy – vacuum cleaner and hair.

“Have you heard of dopamine? (If yes – listen to them talk for a while. We'll assume they said yes and told us what they know). Right, dopamine is a chemical in our brains that communicates when we've done something that feels good and it makes us want to do that thing again. Our brains stop dopamine's effects by sucking it back up into cells with something called the dopamine transporter, or DAT. *This is like a vacuum cleaner sucking up dirt off a rug.* Cocaine works by blocking the vacuuming power of the DAT, *just like too much hair wrapped around the brush will stop a vacuum cleaner from picking up the dirt.* But not all people who try cocaine are affected the same way, and I study how cocaine's ability to block the DAT's vacuuming power may contribute to that individual variability”.

Scientific Field of Study:

Non-science Analogy:



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Additional Non-Science Analogies: