



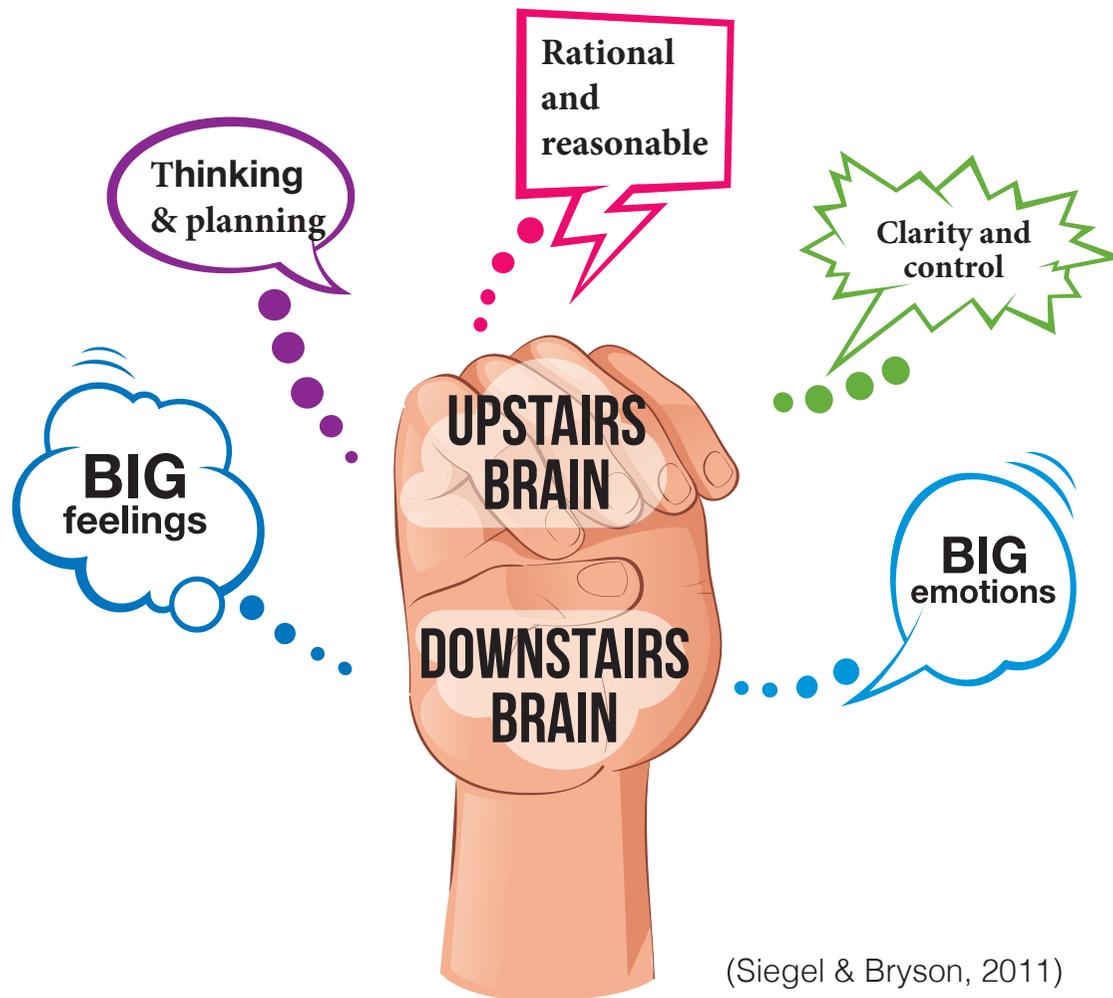
Can We
Navigate
Negativity?

BEACON Program
OPTIMISM PART 2

Popsy
Practical Positive Psychology

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HOW DO EMOTIONS IMPACT OUR BRAIN?



Downstairs Brain

Primitive part of the brain, including the brain stem and limbic system
Brain stem operates automatic functions breathing, digestion, heart rate
Limbic system is 'the emotional seat'
Big Feelings and big emotions
Fight, Flight, Freeze response all housed here.

Upstairs Brain

Last part of the brain to fully develop (mid 20's) includes the cerebral cortex and specifically the pre-frontal cortex (executive functions)

Acts like "air traffic control" for downstairs

- Sound decision making
- Calm, good choices
- Planning
- Rational clear thinking
- Control over body and emotions
- Empathy and morality

The Hand Model of the Brain

What happens when we "flip our lid"

When our brain is working efficiently both the upper and mid brain are communicating effectively. Information comes in and is processed logically. Sometimes too much information is coming in for the Upper brain to process and it disconnects. We "flip our lid" and can no longer access the functions provided by the upper brain.

The Cerebrum or Neo Cortex

Cerebral cortex
Prefrontal cortex
Upper brain
"Logic centre"
"Thinking brain"
"Upstairs brain"

Cerebral cortex

Your brain working in harmony. All parts are connected and talking. The upper part of the brain can be accessed for logic, socialising and reasoning. Our upper brain is hugging our mid brain, making it feel safe

Brain Stem
Reptilian brain
Basic functions
Hind brain

Base of Skull

Spinal cord

Upper and lower parts of the brain are no longer connected and talking. Logic no longer influence emotions. You've "flipped your lid"

The Cerebellum or Limbic Regions

Hippocampus
Amygdala
Mid brain
"Big feelings"
"Cave man" brain
"Downstairs brain"
Information dump from the Central Nervous System



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HOW CAN YOU UNFLIP YOUR LID?

Step 1 Breathe deep belly breaths, with an extra long exhale, letting your body know that it is safe. Move your body, look up rather than down.

Step 2 - Name it to tame it! Name the emotions and sensations you're feeling. Fear? Anxiety? Anger? Tight stomach? Fast heart rate?

Step 3- Recall another situation where you felt threatened in a similar way. What did you do in that situation? What worked well to calm down?

Congratulations - You've re-integrated your upstairs and downstairs brain! You've re-engaged your prefrontal cortex in the process of "thinking" about your reactions. Now you can use your mind to respond differently.

Step 4 - Ride the emotions like a surfboard riding a wave. No emotion stays with us forever, especially when we don't re-act to them. Some say it takes 90 seconds for an emotion to rise and fall if you don't keep re-triggering it. If you keep talking about, and stay stuck in the emotion, it may stay longer.

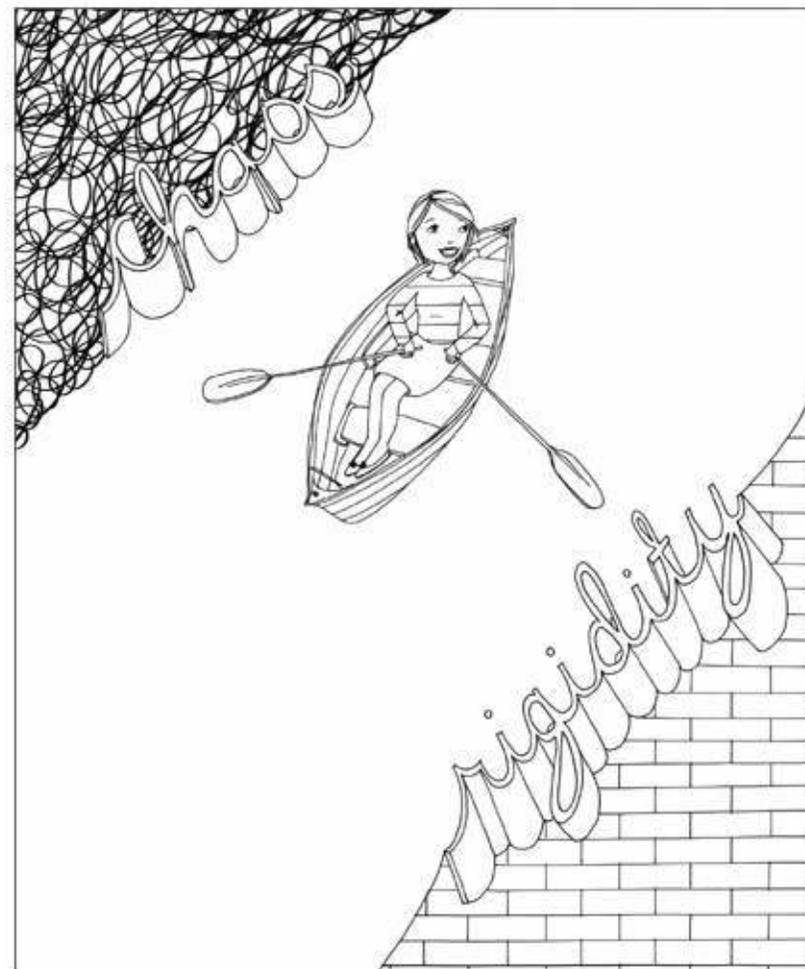
Step 5- Re-evaluate the situation. See more of what's happening through a less emotionally charged lens. (When facing threats, our perceptual field narrows, because it's more important to see the slightest change in what's threatening us than it is to hear the background music.) Is there a real threat to your physical or psychological well-being?

Step 7 - If not, take a few more deep breath breaths. Your body and mind will continue to calm down.

Step 8 (or when you feel ready) Speak to someone you trust and let them know what's happening for you. Stress-releasing oxytocin urges us to connect with others.

Step 9 - Use your thinking brain, prefrontal cortex, to decide what actions you'll take to address the situation, if indeed there's a situation that needs addressing.

(Dr Dan Siegal)



HOW MIGHT WE DIAL DOWN DIFFICULT EMOTIONS?

Dial down heart-straining negativity by ...

Disputing negative thinking – when stories of fear overwhelm you, try challenging your beliefs by asking: “Is this true? Is that the only explanation?” See what alternative, and equally believable stories you can generate that allow you to think, feel and act in more positive ways.

Name it to tame it - naming the emotion you're feeling requires you to engage your thinking brain and may help shift you out of an amygdala hijack. eg I'm angry, afraid, sad etc

Breaking the grip of rumination – when you're going over and over something in your mind and making no progress, try distracting yourself in healthy ways to move your brain back into a broadened thinking space eg move your body, listen to music

Defusing your negativity landmines – spot the people and situations that tend to create negativity in your life. Try avoiding or carefully navigating these negative experiences where you can.

Assessing your media and social media diet – how does the media – newspapers, TV, radio, internet – leave you feeling? What's the best way to balance this to allow for learning and growth without leaving you feeling overwhelmed or helpless?

Finding substitutes for gossip and sarcasm – when you talk about others, highlight their positive qualities and good fortunes, not their weaknesses and mishaps.
(Fredrickson, 2009)

Add AND - when negative thoughts come up in your mind try to add AND I think this AND I can also think of one small positive thing I might be able to do, think or feel. This allows us to understand that we can hold both negative AND positive at the same time.

HALT for your health - “Halt” translates to “stop” in German. HALT is also an acronym for Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired. When one or more of these areas are out of balance, it is more likely we will struggle with health and overall well-being as a result. Take a moment to reflect on whether you are feeling any of these things and take steps to correct or cut yourself some slack knowing the impact this may be having



WHATS YOUR STYLE?

"Whether or not we have hope depends on two dimensions of our explanatory style, pervasiveness and permanence" Martin Seligman



EXPLANATORY STYLE

PESSIMISTIC THINKING STYLE

PERMANENT

THIS WILL LAST FOREVER

PERVASIVE

THIS IS GOING TO UNDERMINE EVERYTHING

PERSONAL

IT'S ME. IT'S MY FAULT

OPTIMISTIC THINKING STYLE

TEMPORARY

THIS WILL PASS

LOCAL

RELATES TO JUST THIS ONE SITUATION

NOT PERSONAL

THIS IS NOT (ENTIRELY) MY FAULT

The defining characteristic of pessimists is that they tend to believe bad events will last a long time, will undermine everything they do and are their own fault. The optimists, who are confronted with the same hard knocks of this world, think about misfortune in the opposite way. They tend to believe that defeat is just a temporary setback, that its causes are confined to just one case. The optimists believe that defeat is not their fault. Pessimists are much more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety. Optimists might be wrong sometimes but despite this, optimism is better for your mental health. And of course this can become self-fulfilling. Once you feel better you are more likely to perform better.

Can You Do The Power Pose?

Professor Amy Cuddy's research has found that adopting a high-power pose for two minutes can give people a feeling of power and confidence, by increasing their testosterone levels and lowering their cortisol levels. The nonverbal expressions of power is about expanding and opening up – you make yourself big, you stretch out, and you take up yet when you feel powerless you do exactly the opposite. You close up. You make yourself small. Women are much more likely to do this kind of thing than men. Powerful people tend to be more assertive and more confident, more optimistic. They also tend to be able to think more abstractly. They take more risks. Their testosterone levels are higher and their cortisol levels are lower than people with less power. Lower cortisol indicates they are not as reactive to stress. Amy suggests by adopting a power pose of confidence you can 'fake it till you make it'. Do it enough times until you internalize it and become it.

Amy suggests trying:

- A two-minute power pose like Wonder Woman
- Taking the time for a full starfish stretch in bed when you wake up in the morning.
- Keep your shoulders back and your chest open when presenting and sitting in meetings or challenging interactions.
- Set posture reminders for yourself to spread out.

A COLLABORATION
TED + **SUPER INTERESTANTE**

FAKE IT 'TIL YOU BECOME IT

We all know that our body language affects how people see us. But does it also shape how we see ourselves? In her TED Talk, "Your body language shapes who you are," social psychologist Amy Cuddy discusses how our posture can affect testosterone and cortisol levels in the brain and change our feelings about ourselves. That means that standing tall and proud – even when we don't feel confident – can have a positive impact on how we're perceived. So take a look in the mirror; your next success could depend on how you pose. — Karin Hueck and Rafael Quick

...Change your posture for two minutes... It could significantly change the way your life unfolds."
– Amy Cuddy

PROTECTIVE
Placing your hand on your face or neck is a low-power pose that communicates a need for protection from other people.

HAND-HIDING
Hiding your hands in your pockets is another example of a low-power pose; it hints that you may lack self-confidence.

WONDER WOMAN
Shift your pose to make yourself appear bigger. That can take you from looking meek to seeming assertive.

TALL AND PROUD
Take a private moment to hold your arms up in a V-shape and lift your chin. That can make you feel (and seem) powerful.

Do You Give Yourself Permission to Be Human??

Give yourself permission to be human. When we accept emotions—such as fear, sadness, or anxiety—as natural, we are more likely to overcome them. Rejecting our emotions, positive or negative, leads to frustration and unhappiness. We are a culture obsessed with pleasure and believe that the mark of a worthy life is the absence of discomfort; and when we experience pain, we take it to indicate that something must be wrong with us. In fact, there is something wrong with us if we don't experience sadness or anxiety at times—which are human emotions. The paradox is that when we accept our feelings—when we give ourselves the permission to be human and experience painful emotions—we are more likely to open ourselves up to positive emotions. Tal Ben - Shahar

The power of AND

You can experience the painful emotions that life throws at you AND make small steps to thriving. Maria Sirios talks about the Swamp and the Pond and how each day will have both but we can hold ourselves accountable for moving a little toward the Pond each day. What would it look like if you moved 5% toward the pond, honoring that we are both broken and whole at any given moment.

