

Your plastic brain

Your brain is plastic.

By that, I don't mean that your brain is made of synthetic material that clogs up landfills. I mean that your brain is moldable. Its able to change, contrary to what most of us have thought for years. Conventional thought is that our brain is made up of more or less fixed neurons, that we can't actually regenerate neurons and after childhood, changing our established neuronal patterns is extremely difficult. But none of these notions are actually true. Your brain is markedly fluid, it responds to its environment (your thoughts and behavior) and changes accordingly. Probably a better term is that it "adapts". It is an organ that has evolved to respond to you and your thoughts, and this is the best possible news any of us could hope for. This means that we can literally change our brains.

You are probably wondering why you would want to change your brain. That's a good question. The answer lies in looking at what you want to change in your life. Are you struggling with the same pattern in dysfunctional relationships? Are you overweight or dealing with a chronic illness you can't seem to overcome? Are your finances a mess, with no way out of debt? These are all situations that can be improved by changing your brain. These are all situations that can respond to your conscious effort to change them.

Neuroplasticity is the emerging science that is showing us there is way more to our brains than what we previously thought. And, interestingly enough, it is re-affirming what ancient traditions have known for millennia. Practices such as meditation, compassion and mindfulness are the key to harnessing the plastic potential of our brains, ultimately leading to positive change and better life outcomes. Whether you choose to approach this issue from the neuroscience

perspective, or from the eastern spirituality perspective, it truly doesn't matter. What matters is that you harness the neuroplastic potential of your brain to benefit your life and achieve what you ultimately desire the most.

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My guess is that the majority of us have more than one area we long to see improve, and yet we feel resistance or a block in how to accomplish that change. This is a normal experience, and while it can definitely be discouraging, there is so much to look forward to if we understand what tools we can use to help our brains change. Our brains are like radios that we have believed are fixed on one single station for our entire lives. We keep hearing the same static, chopped words or grating noise that maybe at one time in our lives sounded like music, but now keeps us feeling stuck and restless. Suddenly, someone comes by and shows us how to change the station, and not only can we change the station, but we can change it to anything we want. The only thing we have to do is pay attention to what we want to listen to the most, and change the station to that frequency. By making what seems like a small and minor adjustment, with total commitment, we can change our experience. We can begin to dance, our movements as fluid as they used to be, twirling and dipping ourselves into a new realm of health and fulfillment.

Take advantage of your glorious, plastic brain. Figure out what areas of your life you have been living in a stuck, dysfunctional pattern and start changing the radio station.

Your brain is there to adapt to what you ultimately want from life, and as it changes, so will you.

Stay tuned for my next post, in which I describe exercises that will help you change your brain for the better.