Rein in Your Brain

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Your Limbic system is located approximately in the center of your brain.

It is the oldest system of your brain – the mammalian brain.

In prehistoric time, it was the largest mass area of your brain.

It is the part of the brain that most people use most often in conflict and trauma.
Recovery Starts in the Brain... or doesn't

BUT!! LIMBIC

DON'T YOU EVER!

you better!

Absolutes

NO!

EVER

Should

Always

If you ever...

Never

Fight

Flight

Could

How???
How Did Your Brain React?

- How did your brain react in these scenario's?
- Did the sense of “fight or flight” trigger in your brain?
- What internal response did you want to give that you filtered out in this room?
- How would you typically react if you were “on the street” in your every day life?
- How do we create a third action rather than freeze, flight or fight?
Understanding the Cortex

- It is located in the front part of the brain.
- Its functions are decision making, problem solving, creativity, discovery.
- It can be trained to be mindful and the mannerisms in which it is said.
- It reacts positively to options.
- It is like your inside computer.
- It helps you to sort, process and store information.
Wellness & Recovery Grows Here...

Let Us Find Another...

YES! Often

Consider

I would like

Is it possible

Thank you

Stand Still

Back-up the Train

Cortex

I believe...

Will you

I wonder

 Lets Discover!

Please
The Cortex - Discovery

- We learn impulse control
- Maturity and imagination develops
- Decision making – judgment – reasoning
- Creativity and discovery
- Problem solving
- Personal Empowerment
- Conflict & trauma resolution
- Romance develops into maturity and commitment
One helpful skill to learn is the ability to stand still in the moment. In standing still in the moment, you learn to stop or slow down your thoughts and conflict process by asking yourself three questions:

- Is about what I am going to say (words and phrases) and the way I am going to say it (tone, inflection, and gestures) going to build the relationship up?
- Is it going to keep the relationship level?
- Is it going to tear the relationship down?
Phrases like “Thank you,” “Please,” “I am sorry,” and “I did not intend to …” give people more power in their lives or diminishes their power?

Words or phrases like the following add what to a conversation?

- I believe
- I wonder
- Let’s discover
- I would like
- Consider
- Often

Consider how this change could affect what you would expect to see in other people (for example; work colleagues, family, and friends).
Phrases that “Romance” the Brain

- Is it possible
- Have you had an opportunity to
- I wonder what would happen if
- Help me understand
- I’m confused, I thought
- Is this ok with you
- I’m curious about
- Please explain to me
Phrases that “Romance” the Brain

- I am sorry
- Is there another way I could (say this, do this, explain this, etc).
- Let us discover, consider, believe
- Often, this is a misunderstood (action, behavior, word, etc.)
Romancing the Brain into Wellness

- My pleasure to
- Please
- Thank you
- May I have permission
- Please tell me what you mean by this
- When you have a minute, would you please
Romancing the Brain into Wellness

- Will you agree to this
- I would like to find a solution, together
- Would you consider
- I would like to assist you
- Your thoughts
- Your Ideas
Training the Brain

- Hear It
- See It
- Say It
- Write It
- Read It
- Repeat It
Conflict Resolution in Recovery

Five (5) Stages of Relationships

- Honeymoon
- Disillusion
- Misery
- Awakening
- Peace/Calm
Honeymoon Stage

* Please take a Trip down Memory Lane with me
* Were you, at one time, looking for that prince or princess?
* Think back to the beginning of that time, the beginning of the relationship, what did you feel and what did you do?

- Exciting
- Scary
- Fun
- Lots of communication
- New feelings
- Hopes
- Dreams
- Careful
- Thoughtful
- Sex was great
- I got cards and notes
- Special nights out
What happens after some time in the Honeymoon stage?

Disillusionment sets in…

This is sometimes referred to as the Familiarization or Adjusting to Reality stage.

Your endorphins cannot keep producing at the same level as before. You become more relaxed in the relationship, as does your partner.

You and your partner are human and your flaws are beginning to show. There’s generally enough goodwill left over from the honeymoon stage that you can overlook most flaws.
Misery Stage

- This is also called the Power Struggle, Disappointment, or Distress stage.
- You become more aware of the differences between you and your partner. Depending on your style of communication, you find yourself avoiding, accommodating, judging, competing, and fighting in the conflict. Conflict continues to grow.
- Deep resentments can begin to build in this stage. You see your partner as uncaring, self-centered, or untrustworthy.
- People really know they are in the Misery stage when they ask themselves:
  - “Why did I ever get involved with this person in the first place?”
  - “What was I thinking?”
  - “If only I never got involved in the first place!”
  - “Will this ever change?”
  - “Is there no way out?”
Awakening Stage

- This is also called the Stability, Friendship, or Reconciliation stage.
- Couples who make it this far express feelings of stronger commitment, connection, trust, and love.
- You know neither one of you is perfect, but this concept is no longer threatening.
- You are confident in your ability to resolve most of your issues.
- You begin to reestablish your own outside interests (unlike the Honeymoon stage, where you only had eyes for each other).
- There is some danger of boredom with your partner, so you have to work to maintain the connection you made in the Honeymoon stage.
- Most couples are comfortable and content at this stage.
- To help a couple move to this stage, it is vital that they learn how to listen and communicate with each other.
Peace & Calm Stage

- Other names for this stage are Commitment, Acceptance, Transformation, or Real Love.
- It is estimated that less than 5 percent of couples make it to this stage.
- You are with your partner because you have chosen him or her, faults and all, not because you need him or her.
- You and your partner are a team and look out for each other’s best interests.
- At this stage, your relationship becomes a true partnership.
Getting to Peace & Calm
Four (4) Types of Agreement

- Financial
- Physical/Spatial
- Emotional/Social
- Spiritual
Financial Agreements

- What do you need to be in financial agreement?
- Who works?
- What amount of money do you need for the household? (Don’t fool yourself: if you are a $75,000-a-year expectation person, and your partner only makes $35,000, then there will be conflict.)
- Is it one joint checking account or two separate checking accounts?
- Is there savings, money for retirement and money for vacation?
- And what about donations? Is tithing something you believe in?
What are your physical expectations for the sexual relationship, physical exercise, the manner in which you keep up yourself (body, hair, etc.)?

What type of physical space do you need—a crowded room, a sparse room, a house in the open, a house in the woods or in the city? What about physical abuse? What is okay with you? What is not negotiable (such as pushing, shoving, beating, hitting, scratching, etc.)?

What is physical safety to you and appropriate boundaries in your relationship for all the above areas? What about own “body bubble”? How close do you like your partner and how often? Are you a cuddlier or do you prefer to have more space?
Emotional & Social Agreements

- Emotional agreements also take into account those times when the other person is just “off” emotionally.

- We don’t always know the whys of it and just needing a little extra special consideration to get through whatever it is.

- This kind of emotional support goes both ways, for the nature of emotional agreement is reciprocal.

- Part of the discussion on the emotional agreement is to learn your partner’s emotional strengths and weaknesses.
Emotional & Social Agreements (Cont)

- Do you expect unconditional love and support?
- Do you expect understanding and a person to listen to your hurts?
- How is that played out at the end of day, on the weekend, after an argument?
- Do you go to bed on your fight, in anger?
- What do you need there in terms of resolution?
Every person comes to this life with a spiritual piece

How we relate to that spiritual side is dependent on the fabric of our background

Not everyone identifies their spiritual side

Yet, everyone goes about trying to fill it in some manner
Healing & Nurturing Yourself

- Dance
- Music
- Writing
- Sharing
- Laughter
- Praying
- Mediating
- Forgiving
Writing Your Story & Telling Your Story

Once Upon A Time There Was a Counselor Who Needed to Learn:

The Counselor Learned These Lessons By:

The Gifts This Counselor Has Are:

- Making Your Own Talking Stick
- Sharing Your Story
Positive Affirmations

- Positive affirmations build up your own self-esteem. They also give background and ideas to build the self-esteem of others.
- A person can learn to love him or herself as well as learn to love others and be of positive support to them and to him or herself.
- Make a list of positive affirmations – use a sticky pad and place them in strategic places
- Build an “affirmation box” – great way to get others involved
- Is your self-talk constructive and positive?
- Is it negative and destructive?
Affirmations Examples

- I’m a good parent
- I work hard
- I am responsible
- I am a good person
- I am a good counselor
- I can still learn new things
- I love life
- I love others
- I can change
“What I like about you is … ”
“When you helped me out with ______, it made me feel wonderful!”
“You have a beautiful heart”
“I can always count on you”
“You are amazing
I love you
Mediating on the Positive

- Taking the Confusion and Negative out!
Creating a Mantra

- A mantra can be used to change your brain and your self-direction.
- Mantra’s assist you through the tough times.
- Mantra’s remind you of what you already know & believe.
- Learning a higher level of self and impulse control is possible and attainable.
- It truly is a “brain choice.”
Develop your own statement that you believe and will say when you feel like you want to explode, yell, fight, scream, or basically, lose control.

Example: “I think I can, I think I can!”
Tip 1 – Stand Still in the Moment

- Reverse of flight or fight (Limbic)
- Take your time
- Delay a reaction and consider your actions (is about what I am going to say and do…)
- Indecision can be your best friend in order to get to mutual problem solving
- Third reaction …. Stand still in the moment
Once the brain is uncluttered, we can begin to set priorities; for example:

- Make a list of priorities
- Refine the list by indicating those items that you need to get done and those that you want to get done
- Decide which items you can delegate, distribute, disregard, or postpone
- Determine whether you have all the information you need or whether you need to partner with someone to accomplish a task

Can use meditation with music (for example, heavenly music with harps and/or flutes) along with positive affirmations or mantras to help bring about a sense of calm
Tip 2 - Do Not Assume Intent

- Another version of the “Blame Game”
- People within sticking distance
- Let go of presumptions or premeditated attacks
- Misunderstandings and accidental collisions
- Accountability as a “WE” issue – change is the responsibility of both parties
Check it Out!

- Information is useful.
- Inner agreement not to follow what you “might know”.
- Ask for clarification or information.
- “Call out” words and behaviors that are hurtful.
- Seek out the intention of the other person.
- Watch for your own “baggage” getting in the way.
- Ask the other person to tell you what they meant by the words or behaviors.
- Remember – not to go “limbic”!
Tip 3 - Dig Deeper into Conflict and Anger

- Digger deeper into conflict and anger is like being an archaeologist
- There is reasonable expectation that there is a some type if treasure below
- Our treasure is our “fabric” of our life
- “Fabric” is our: culture, race, religion, values, creativity, ideas, past experiences, family’s past experiences, unresolved grief, layers of happiness and love and go on.
- Other examples of the “fabric” of your life?
Being an Archaeologist

- An archaeologist for humans understands at a deeper level
- Everyone has wonderfulness and desperation
- Not a comparison game – more like a reality show
- Using the Tips helps us to view the show without assumptions
- It means putting aside your well-developed defense mechanisms
- Put on your solution-focused glasses
The more you back up the train – oops, did not mean to say it that way, in that manner with those assumptions and dig deeper… The more likely you are to get beyond the surface and get to the issues …that now can be identified and resolved!

Work not to bring shame/blame/pain back!
Tip 4 - Cultivate Confusion

- A powerful tool for resolving problems and conflicts
- Withhold judgment, guessing and blame
- Most likely your first impression in a conflict has a more neutral second impression – if you can just get there!
Leading with Confusion

- “I’m confused. How did we get to this place of anger? Let’s find another way.”
- “I am confused. Did we not have an agreement to do such and such?”
- “Help me understand why I am feeling this resistance. Did I say or do something to offend you?”
- “Help me understand how we can move away from this impasse to a place of positive movement.”
- I’m confused. I felt like we were connected and in agreement on this issue before. What has happened since we last spoke about it? Did something change your mind?”
Tip 5 – The Paradox of Control

- A paradox is a seemingly contradictory statement that may be true.
- The paradox of control means the more and harder I try to control you, the less and less of you I am in control of you.
- The common denominator of being human = control junkie
- We become less of who we are in the process
- Emotional manipulations to control others
Tip 6 - Look to the Misunderstanding

- People, in general, think they know THE TRUTH with a capital “T”.
- If things do not go their way, they feel compelled to interrupt or point out an error in your reasoning.
- See the world in black or white – no grays or rainbows.
- In interpersonal communications…there is always – all ways – more than one truth!
The parties to start over and say what they meant to say in the way they meant to say it.
What was heard may not be what was meant.
Divorce yourself from the first reading of the conflict.
You may have different views saying the same thing!
Misunderstanding creates a wall
No one wins when the wall is in the way!
A blameless relationship with ourselves begins with peeling the layers of onion.

At our outer layer of exploration we discover that we have to peel further to get to the true meaning.

Examining our self-talk helps us to see directly into our relationship with ourselves.

Recording these conversations may help us see the effects of being raised in our families of origin.

We can learn to cut the invisible apron strings that bind us to old patterns and behaviors.
Tip 8 – Avoiding Premature Forgiveness

- The first response of a peacemaker is to shut down in an conflict or disagreement
- Or work quickly to smooth it over
- Major problem in close or intimate relationships
- Act as if the most important thing is to re-establish harmony
- Happens at their and the others personal expense
- Tick - Tick - Tick - Boom!!!
Keep the Conversation Going

- The under-reactor needs to bite their lip from saying the usual “I forgive you’s”.
- And... keep the conversation going or take a break and agree to come back to the conversation when things have cooled.
- Say what you don’t like – words, behaviors and what you want to see different in the future.
- Share the responsibility of solving the problem by changing your behavior.
- Your needs are important, too.
Tip 9 - Put Down Your Dukes

- Getting angry, taking the offensive and attacking someone verbally is offensive and hurtful.
- Competers are in your face with an over-reactive style.
- Accommodators and Avoiders have an ultimate same result: Tick–Tick–Tick–Boom.
- The best offense is a good defense.
Is the Best Offense a Good Defense?

- Cumulative effects of defense over time...all the negative behaviors of defending
- Major source of damage to the people who matter most in your life – the ones you are suppose to be the closest
- All said and done – putting up your dukes as an attempt of cutting off communication – kills most relationships
What Causes This Defensiveness?

- We start out in Honeymoon (the Stages of Relationships) and are kissing up to each other.
- We move into Disillusion – real life come into play and the styles of communication, family origin issues, come to the front of the relationship.
- Misery sets in – and the blame for the deception – you are not the prince or princess I started out with!
- This is when the “Four Agreements” come in – if we could only figure out what we really want.
- Opposites attracted – now are detractors.
Courageous People

- Courageous people make big efforts to be transparent
- Put their dukes down
- Create meaningful conversations
- Risk their ego for the possibility of creating a new life change – intimacy
- Intimacy is broken down to four interconnecting words: 
  In – To – Me - See
Come on Now – Put Your Dukes Down

- Lead with your transparencies
- Take the Tips and use them daily
- Remain – hang in there – build your spiritual, emotional, psychological self
- Influence the potential change in the relationship by establishing the change in you
- No relationship is perfect – we all must work to get to better relationships
- It is a life long journey
What is the Life Script you are living?
Listen to your words and pick it out.
Change the inner dialogue to the positive outcomes you want in your life!
Not to go limbic with yourself.
How could this be played out differently using the tips?
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REIN IN YOUR BRAIN
FROM IMPULSIVITY TO THOUGHTFUL LIVING IN RECOVERY
Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II with Victoria Costello
May 2014
$14.95 US, $17.50 CDN
Self-Help/Substance Abuse & Addictions

Those in recovery learn to "rein in their brain," ending compulsive behaviors while fostering a more thoughtful lifestyle that ensures long-term emotional sobriety.

Addiction—whether to mood-altering substances, gambling, sex, or food—stems in part from an overreliance on the reward system of the primitive part of the brain. This "pleasure pathway" can push us to make poor choices based on an expectation of immediate gratification.

Those of us in recovery often struggle with compulsive thoughts and behaviors, and childhood traumas that are still programmed in our addictive brains well after the drinking and drugging has stopped. This compulsiveness often plays out thoughtlessly in our interactions with others, damaging our relationships and growth as balanced human beings.

Rein in Your Brain, by addiction expert Cynthia Moreno Tuohy and author Victoria Costello, offers ten tools for breaking the cycle of impulsivity. These time-tested self-interventions include standing still in the moment, giving up control, not assuming another's intent, tolerating differences, accepting emotions without giving them free reign, and differentiating between immediate fear-driven reactions and measured thoughts. By incorporating these techniques into your daily interactions, your relationships can move from those of conflict to mutual respect and understanding.
Thanks and Blessings

- Many blessings as you move through your life. It is yours to change and influence!

- Thank you for participating in the Workshop