

Lesson 83: The Path to Cognitive, Emotional and Spiritual Maturity

Series Seven: How Your Brain Influences Your Mind

It is a well known fact in the field of neuroscience and neuropsychology that the brain has a very distinct influence on the mind just as the mind has an influence on the brain. Because there is an esoteric, metaphysical, psychological, spiritual and even religious tendency to focus far more attention on how the mind is influencing the brain, the neurological, biological and physiological effects of the brains influence on the mind are often overlooked. The omission of this very important information accounts for the reason why it is often so difficult to bring about desired changes in spite of your very best intentions, and why changing your mind can sometimes feel like a self-defeating challenge. Knowing what is going on in your brain and how it is influencing and affecting your reality, not to mention your physical body, heightens your awareness, thereby, making it far more possible for you to actually effect desired changes. As was indicated in series five, there is much more to the business of changing your mind than what was possible to cover in that discussion, but as was promised, the discussion in this series is going to focus on bringing to your attention some important information that will help you understand how your brain influences your mind, thus deepening your conscious awareness of what is really going on when you change your mind, whether significantly or insignificantly. Given that you, as the reader, may or may not be scientifically inclined, the information in this discussion will be presented from a non-scientific approach so that the message being conveyed is not lost to scientific lingo.

The human brain has undergone many stages of evolutionary changes in response to its ever-changing environment over the course of millions of years, including the formation of its social environment. And because of its many adaptations to its typically harsh and unstable environment, which was primarily for the sake of survival and to successfully pass on its genes, the evolutionary changes were genetically hardwired into the expanding brain. And because of this evolutionary hardwiring, what goes on in your mind has a lot to do with what is going on in your brain, which sometimes makes it very difficult to change your mind and to stick with your intentions. But even though your brain is hardwired in a certain way, and the biochemical and physiological effects are the proof of that hardwiring, you are not held captive by the evolutionarily function of your brain. The term evolutionarily with respect to the brain just means that the brain has developed over a long course of changes and adaptations to its environment and is, therefore, inclined to habitually respond to the conditions of life. What is important about the process of evolution with respect to the current condition of the brain, is that the brain tripled in size over the past three million years, which means that it is far more capable of positive integration with your mind than it was when humans had to rely on brain/mind functions for its very survival, physically and genetically speaking.

It is no secret today that personal problems, including interpersonal problems, can be solved when its underlying causes are investigated, processed and integrated on a mental and emotional level. Thus, understanding the role the brain is playing in terms of personal suffering is vital to resolving current and past personal problems, which in turn affects the degree of guaranteed future suffering – not a favorable condition to exist in. Thus, the more you learn about the nature of your own personal reality, the less internal battles you will have to endure, likewise, the fewer external struggles you will be confronted with on a daily basis. Knowing what energetic forces you are up against, whether internal or external is half the battle, but knowing how your own brain is affecting your reality equates to winning the battle. Possessing the right knowledge is not only a spiritual fundamental as the Buddha taught; it is one that has stood the test of time and is the key to an abundant life. So often undesirable experiences occur in life that are not easily attributed to its real causes, but are erroneously attributed to what appears to be true on the surface, in accordance with your level of cognitive knowledge, wisdom and insight. But getting to the root causes requires lifting the veil of mental illusions and investigating what is going on beyond the veil that not only exists in the confines of your mind, but exists in the confines of your brain.

The brain's point of entry into adversely affecting your reality begins with the fact that it is already hardwired to negatively affect your personal experiences. This undesirable situation occurs because the brain has a built-in negative bias due to its evolution, when it had to map the majority of its neural circuitry for the sake of survival long before a social environment existed. So attributes such as mindfulness, virtue and wisdom were not necessarily the focus of attention in environments that required survival skills as opposed to social skills. Thus, your brain is hardwired with respect to your survival as a human being first and foremost. You have probably experienced or know someone who has experienced untold strength in the face of eminent danger. The biological effects are that adrenaline is pumped into your blood stream and into your muscles at a rapid rate so that you are adequately endowed with sufficient physical “fight or flight” stamina, depending on the circumstances. The physiological effects are that you feel “pumped up” and you are aware of the presence of physical strength that is not ordinary to your everyday experiences.

In addition to being evolutionarily hardwired, the neuronal circuits in your brain fire and wire in accordance with the conditions of your own personal environment. The majority of the problems you face in the course of your life, while they are typical of the human condition, they are unnecessary unpleasant encounters that can be avoided when they are understood as they are and not as they appear to be, which is not one and the same and, consequently, produces an entirely different manifestation in your reality. In all cases your brain and your mind work together in tandem to form your realities, however, your brain has a built-in jump start when it comes to dictating certain outcomes that are assured each and every time because of the brains propensity for

repetition. It is one thing to say that by intention you can change your reality or by changing your mind you can change your reality and that you are empowered to effect desirable changes in your life, but it is another thing to know what you are up against when attempting to effect such changes proves to be a mental exercise in futility. The process of effecting positive changes in your life experiences, being empowered and acting with intent is a mental challenge to say the least when the focus of your attention is placed on your mind. But attempting to effect desirable changes becomes that much more difficult when you are unknowingly swimming against the current of your own neuronal circuits. It is definitely in your best interest to know what information has been stored in your brain, outside of its evolutionary conditioning, as the means to unravel your own mental and emotional life entanglements.

In the field of psychology, there are recognized environmental conditions that can adversely affect how you will experience your reality as it pertains to the quality and the difficulty of your life experiences. These preset conditions have everything to do with the environment you were born into and grew up in, which of course, is not etched in cement because childhood is a subjective experience at best, as is every stage of your life thereafter. But this particular time in your early life so often sets precedence for how certain circumstances and events will play out all through your life and will directly affect your potential accomplishments, which your brain will be all too happy to program into its neuronal networks and, consequently, comply with. So it is important to have a clear perspective as to the kind of environment you grew up in, as this sets the stage for the quality of your life experiences after childhood. These parental or primary caregiver environments relate to feeling secure, anxious or the need to be avoidant. If you grew up in an environment in which you felt secure and supported and was free to express the nature of your true self, your brain mapped its neuronal networks to being secure and supported. Consequently, your experiences in life are mostly processed through the parasympathetic nervous system as well as the prefrontal cortex, which basically means that your experiences are very desirable, that you are more likely to not only realize your dreams, but to be clear about your dreams and goals. If you grew up in an anxious environment, in which your true nature was inhibited more than it was allowed to be expressed freely, your brain mapped its circuitry to correspond with that anxious environment and processes that environment through the sympathetic nervous system, along with other brain processes that involve the emotions. Lastly, if you grew up in an environment where it was necessary to avoid the recognition of your own needs, wants and desires; sometimes for fear of being mentally, verbally or physically abused or you felt invalidated and unworthy because someone erroneously declared that you were stupid and would never amount to anything, your brain mapped itself to avoidance and because your brain mapped its neuronal networks to that very limiting mental and emotional environment, avoidance probably became second nature to you.

Unfortunately, these conditions persist right through to adulthood where they remain fully intact at all times unless, through your own persistence and intent, you cause your brain to form a new neuronal structure in which the neurons fire and wire together, working in your favor instead of working against you. Overcoming the neuronal affects of a negative childhood environment requires a strong dose of self-validation, self-worthiness and self-esteem, along with possessing just the right amount of confidence and courage to push through the negative affects so as to realize your dreams and achieve your goals. However, this much needed level of self-worth, self-esteem, confidence and courage do not always go hand in hand with a negative environment, but usually become embedded self-destructive thought patterns, disabling and limiting beliefs, and distorted perceptions, along with some very unrealistic expectations of yourself and others, all of which affects your mental attitude. Unrealistic expectations are not just attributed to overzealousness, but are attributed to accepting less than what you are potentially capable of achieving due to the fact that you may have felt so mentally and emotionally beaten down, that you inevitably formed a core belief that you are, for example, incompetent, worthless or stupid and that you will never amount to anything worthwhile. How sad is that!

The effort it takes to pull yourself up out of your mental and emotional pit of disparity will range in its intensity, depending on how far down you have fallen into the pit. It takes a fair amount of energy to climb out of the pit and determine for yourself that you are worth far more than you give yourself credit for or that others gave you credit for. Of the many beliefs and perceptions that generally occur as the result of having fallen into a mental pit of disparity, is that the prevailing condition is all too often accepted as being your “lot in life” which is anything but the truth. Worse yet is the religious acceptance that failing to realize your dreams or achieve your goals is God’s will for you. This mindset is a very erroneous deceptive perception and a very limiting belief to say the least. Every human being is spiritually endowed with the necessary cognitive skills, talents and abilities to realize their dreams and to achieve their goals. Life itself is an ongoing series of inspirations, visions and ideas that when acted on usually produce desirable results, even if those personal successes come by way of many a trial and error. After all, life is a learning process.

Mental conditioning is a very important factor to take into consideration when it comes to real or unrealistic expectations. There are loads of prosperity and law of attraction guru’s out there vying for your attention and your money in an effort to get rich at your expense, while trying to convince you that you too can get rich, and pretty quickly too, if you buy into their propaganda. The truth is that you will get rich and will do so with very little effort if you are already internally, and therefore, neuronally conditioned to wealth or any other form of abundance you desire to experience, eg., materialism or relational. If you are not truly conditioned, such desires can veer on the edge of being unrealistic and the pursuit of them will surely set you up for failure, which in of itself

will result in undesirable consequences. This is not to say that you cannot succeed in an endeavor that falls outside of your normal life experiences, because the opportunity for success always exists, but it does require a success geared state of mind - a mental attitude that is conducive for achieving success. You cannot expect to achieve a desired measure of personal success if your brain has been hardwired for failure, thus you act and react with the mindset of failure rather than acting on the mindset of success which in of itself is the key to achieving any level of success. The brain naturally gravitates toward negativity, thus, knowledge of this important factor, that is automatically working against you right out of the starting gate, can be very significant in knowing from the top down what mental obstacles are standing in your path and need to be overcome before you can realistically attain your desired measure of success.

Many well-known esoteric, metaphysical and spiritual authorities spoke about the matter of being empowered and the benefits of living in the here and now. While the advice itself stands on its own time tested merits, it is important to know that there is a psychology involved which makes it appear on the surface that realizing your dreams and achieving your goals is just a stone's throw away – as simple as merely changing your mind. And while the adage: change your mind, change your life also rings true, you simply cannot leave the most essential part of the equation out, which is the effect your brain is having on your reality and is doing so behind the scenes without your conscious awareness of its method of operation, its modus operandi. Your brain is wired, both evolutionarily and environmentally speaking and as such it operates with no need of your conscious awareness. Consequently, your reality is affected by your brain's natural negative tendencies and, furthermore, you are not likely to have a clue that this is occurring outside of your conscious awareness unless you become aware of the fact that your brain has its own operating system, that it is altered by its environment and by your mind, and that your brain alters your mind and your environment too. But once you become aware that you are more than your own thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, expectations and overall mental attitude, you will have the means with which to discover yourself on a deeper level, including your well embedded brain patterns. Self-discovery will allow you to discern any underlying mental and emotional obstacles, as well as the source of them. Exploring the role your brain is playing in the formation of your personal reality triggers the freeing up process. This is where your self-empowerment really begins.

Now, it is vitally important that you do not use the function of your brain as a scapegoat for unacceptable and irresponsible behavior because you will only incur that much more karmic accountability, that inevitably you will have to pay for somewhere down the road, whether in terms of undesirable consequences manifested in your reality or some other means of karmic repayment, perhaps in another incarnation to settle the score. The point in this discussion, with respect to the function of the brain as it relates to your personal experiences, is to shed light on an important factor that you would not

ordinarily think to take into consideration. Even more important is that although your brain is capable of creating new neurons and forming new neuronal networks in which it fires off signals between the newly formed neurons as well as sending signals to the associated cells and organs in your body and activates certain parts of your brain that correspond to an intended change of your mind, the art of developing a new circuitry takes time. Such desired changes are not an overnight success, especially when there is an attempt to change your mind without identifying the reasons why you have been prone to habitually acting, reacting, thinking, believing, perceiving and expecting, as you probably have been doing for a very long time. Some habits are hard to form and even harder to break. The brain itself easily gravitates to the formation of negative habits simply because it is hard wired to do so, and does so with little or no effort on your part, which is all the more reason why you need to be alert and oriented to being more aware of what is going on in your brain and how it is relating to your mind.

The brain has a built in system of record keeping, if for no other reason than the fact that negative experiences have more of an impact on survival as opposed to positive experiences, which do not have as great an impact on survival. So the brain automatically records the experiences in your life in its own internal filing system, the hippocampus. These events are recorded in such a way that it enables the brain to quickly recall the events, leaving your mind to fill in the details, as the brain only stores the most essential information, otherwise the brain would run out of memory if it stored every single detail from every event that occurs in the course of your life. This is why it can be so difficult to unlearn certain habits and behaviors. Even in spite of your best intentions to change a habit or a behavior, and the degree of success in achieving this endeavor, the brain still holds the original pattern, or at least traces of it stored away in its memory bank and, therefore, can be quickly recalled if and when necessary. The brain's ability to store negative experiences in what is called implicit memory, accounts for much of the habitual "stinking thinking" that goes on in your mind. You may think this habitual form of thinking is only localized to your mental processes, but make no mistake in discounting your brain as being the real culprit working behind the scenes. It is a well established fact in the field of neuropsychology and neuroscience that the brain can detect negative information quicker than it detects positive information and, furthermore, that the brain is actually drawn to bad news. All the more reason to be on your A-game where your thinking, believing, perceiving and expectations are concerned, as you can so easily get caught up in negative behaviors and experiences, not just experiences inflicted on you by internal or external causes, but those you inflict on others because you are not aware of how you are affecting the reality of others in your circle of life.

Being a responsible adult means taking responsibility for your actions and reactions, as you do not have the right to blindly go through life like the Tasmanian devil, stirring up a dust storm everywhere you go, including wreaking havoc in your own life. You are

empowered to change the conditions of your life and while this mindset may be contrary to your thinking, especially if you have been in the habit of blaming others for your misfortunes and even blaming yourself for that matter, the process of change begins in your brain and flows down into your mind because your mind interacts with your brain, thus one affects the other and does so in conjunction with the conditions, either positive or negative, that have been programmed into your brain. In addition, this programming also relates to what parts of your brain light up and respond biologically and physiologically in response to how you experience your life. Neuronally speaking, like definitely attracts like which is why thoughts eventually do become the things you will experience in the course of your life.

Just knowing that your brain is having a positive or a negative effect in your reality is a liberating experience all on its own. Although this knowledge about the brain does imply a certainty with respect to some things being out of your control, you are nonetheless mentally empowered by cognitive processes: intelligent application and even spiritual application to change the flow of your personal experiences. For some people, effecting a desired change is just a matter of changing their mind with intent and sticking to that intent so that the energy of the intent becomes embedded in their brain as well as in their mind. This is how like attracts like and thoughts become things, either for the good or the not so good, depending on how you are cognitively processing your current and past experiences. For others, perhaps such as yourself, effecting a desired change in your life might require a more thorough mental overhaul in order to locate and remove well embedded disabling core beliefs. You may have noticed that there was not much focused placed on the matter of the emotions in this discussion. This was intentional because the emotions play such a significant role in formulating thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and expectations to the degree that it requires a discussion of its own.

In closing we hope that we have successfully elevated your conscious awareness with respect to how your brain is affecting the nature of your personal reality. We hope that you will not take this information lightly, as the role your brain plays is crucial to your overall well-being and will adversely affect your well-being if left unattended, as such adverse affects from the brain can result in a host of biochemical and physiological undesirable effects which puts you at risk for psychological and medical disorders. Please feel free to ask questions, share your thoughts or your personal experiences.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We

linda@dragonofdrama.com

In closing....if there is an interest in knowing more about the neurological aspects of how your brain functions such as understanding the difference between the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system...