



1.
If You
Give A
Kid A
Brain!

The Bible reveals how God designed your brain for some really amazing possibilities!



Think of all the possibilities
If You Give A Kid A Brain!

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” 3 John 1:2

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28



If You Give A Kid A Brain will help you **increase your emotional intelligence!** The lessons use Scriptures and brain science to explain your strong urges and desires! Knowing how your brain creates lusts & desires will help you endure these emotions.

If You Give A Kid A Brain will help you **increase your spiritual intelligence!** This workbook will give you a picture of which brain circuits are activated when you love God with all your heart, and what happens in your brain when you love (lust) for the things of the world.

If You Give A Kid A Brain illustrates how God **designed your brain for efficiency!** Your brain itself does not discriminate between good and bad skills. All skills become second nature (instinctual) with practice. Your brain must learn to avoid harmful skills and pursue good ones.

If You Give A Kid A Brain reveals where the devil attacks your desires and where God's Word and the Holy Spirit strengthens your self-control.



If You Give A Kid A Brain will help you increase your emotional intelligence!

“Be anxious for nothing . . . let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds . . . Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.”

Philippians 4:6-11

If You Give A Kid A Brain will help you increase your spiritual intelligence!

“That He would grant you . . . to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith . . . that you, may be able to comprehend...” Ephesians 3:14-20

If You Give A Kid A Brain illustrates how God designed your brain for efficiency!

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Romans 12:2

If You Give A Kid A Brain reveals where the devil attacks your desires and where God strengthens your self-control.

“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin...” Romans 7:22,23



Imagine getting a Smart Device with technology more advanced and complex than any device made so far!

This Smart Device weighs about 3 pounds, is waterproof, never needs to be recharged, and comes with the fastest processor on the planet. With it, you will learn and master many skills and accomplish great goals!

This Smart Device also has a very dangerous function! It will help you pursue harmful activities and obtain sinful things that feel really good. The danger is that you will have total control of your device to do, get and accomplish what you like, whether good or bad!

God gave you your Smart Device when you were in your mother's womb. It is your brain!

Scientists describe the human brain as the most complex organ in the whole universe! Therefore, it could be called the Smartest Device!





**God has a plan for your
your smartest device
(brain heart, soul, mind):**

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

There are two areas of your brain that the Bible discusses:

1. What scientists call the reward (dopamine) pathway which is activated by love, devotion, desire, lust, temptation, and coveteousness.
2. Your brain’s ability to change, grow, learn, and even rewire (renew) itself. Scientists call this neuroplasticity.

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

Proverbs 4:23



The Tortoise and the **The Girl**

(a tale of two brains)



A newly hatched sea tortoise can crawl, separate from her siblings and begin a vast transatlantic migration alone without parents or learning. Her brain had already formed every connection she'll need for the great journey ahead. At 10, she will have completed a solo 9,000 mile circumnavigation of the Sargasso Sea and return to the shores where she was born to build her own nest. The turtle's brain was designed to masterfully navigate the ocean.

Newborn, Alice's abilities are somewhat limited. She can cry, sleep, eat, and hiccup. At 7 months, Alice will learn to sit up. In a year or so she'll be walking. In another decade, she will be walking to school by herself. Alice's human brain was designed to adapt to any environment, play any instrument, pilot a 747, be a neuroscientist, learn any skill, navigate the Atlantic by herself if she wants. Everything she needs to learn these things is already there.

It is your brain that elevates you above all of the rest of God's creation!

4.



**Your brain (heart, soul, mind)
is a million more times
capable than the turtle's:**

**"When I consider Your heavens, the
work of Your fingers, The moon and the
stars, which You have ordained, what
is man that You are mindful of him."**

Psalm 8:3,4

**"... For You have made him a little lower
than the angels, and You have crowned
him with glory and honor. You have
made him to have dominion over the
works of Your hands; You have put all
things under his feet," Psalm 8:5,6**

**Your brain (heart, soul and
mind) elevates you
above all of creation!**

**"Then God said, "Let Us make man in
Our image, according to Our
likeness..." Genesis 1:26**

**"Then God blessed them, and God said
to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill
the earth and subdue it; have dominion
over the fish of the sea, over the birds of
the air, and over every living thing that
moves on the earth." Genesis 1:28**

86 Billion Signal Senders (neurons) in Your Brain!

5.



An easy way to think of how neurons function is to imagine baseball players throwing a baseball around the field.

Each player represents a neuron and the baseball represents a specific signal for a specific mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual task.

One end of the neuron throws (sends) the signal and the other end catches (receives) it.



Picture numerous neurons (players) sending & receiving signals for activities as simple as scratching your nose or as difficult as piloting a 747 jet, and everything in between.



Your 86 billion neurons work together to carry out every physical task (reading this sentence, standing up, driving, talking, playing sports, learning a new skill, etc.) **your body performs.**

Your 86 Billion Signal Senders (neurons) are also working together when you perform spiritual tasks!

5.



“...Exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”

1 Timothy 4:7,8



“...Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” 2 Peter 1:5,6



Some of your 86 billion neurons are sending, receiving, sending, etc. signals when you decide and do tasks like the ones in the above passage!



Neuron communication is also like people communicating with each other.

We use our mouths to speak and our ears to receive those messages. Our voices usually convey the message between one person's mouth and another person's ears. Dr. Tiffany Rogers

Neurons use chemical and electrical signals to talk between each other.

God gives you control over the conversation within the reward circuit of your brain.





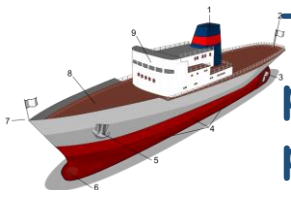
At your command, a number of your neurons will work together to enable you to perform the “works of the flesh” or grow “fruit of the Spirit.”

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...” Galatians 5:19-21

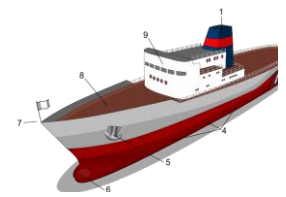
“...The fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace,
longsuffering, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness, self-control...”

Galatians 5:22,23

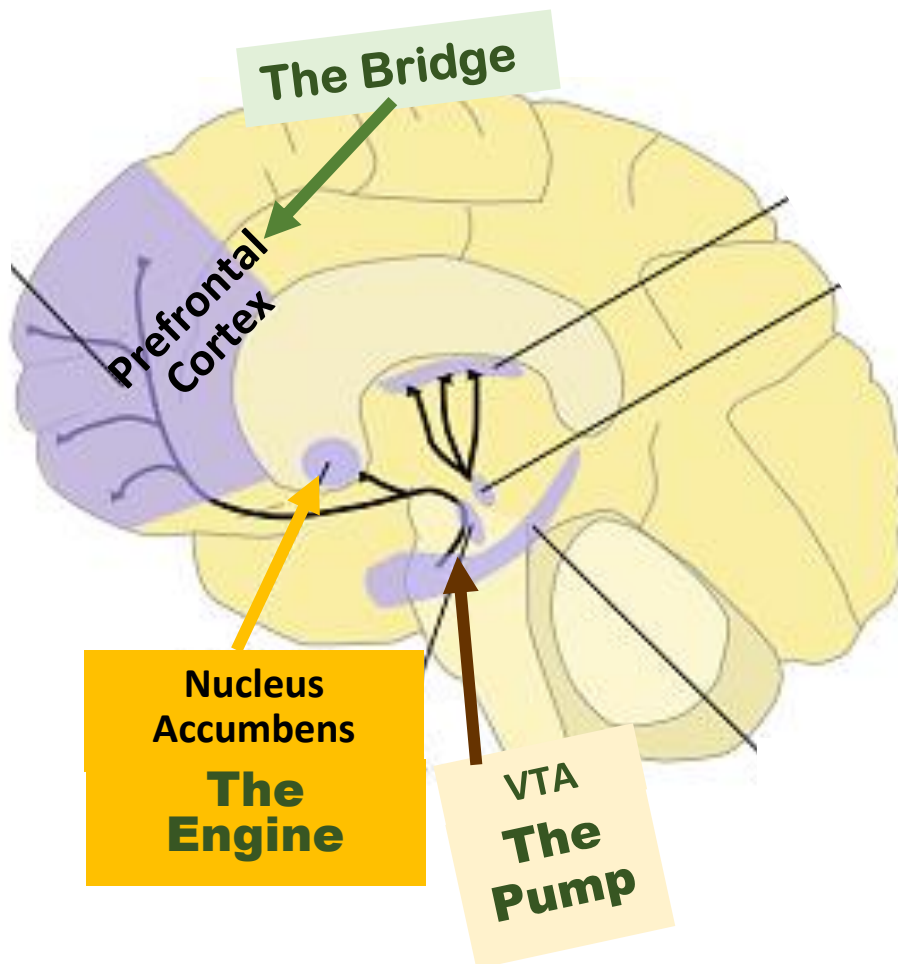




Think of your reward (dopamine) pathway as a ship having a fuel pump, engine and bridge (main deck):

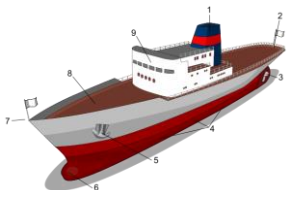


Your reward pathway begins at the ventral tegmental area (VTA). It functions like a ship's fuel pump. When you see something you would like to have, do or accomplish, it manufactures the dopamine and sends the dopamine signal to the nucleus accumbens (the engine).

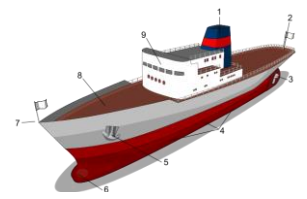


The nucleus accumbens functions like a ship's engine. When it receives the dopamine signal, it generates motivation and attention to help you accomplish the goals you choose.

Then, there is the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for judgment, decision-making, perspective-taking, and self-regulation. The prefrontal cortex, like the bridge of a ship, steers your behavior. Neuroscientist Dr. Marc Lewis (adapted)

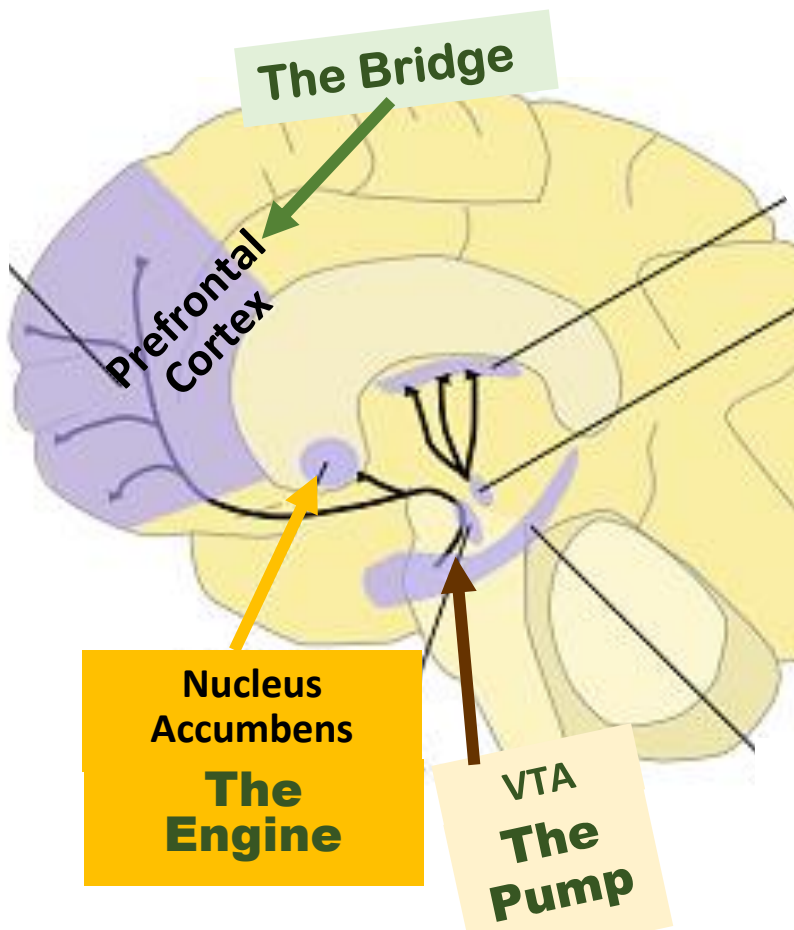


The signal dopamine is a desire chemical. It can be your best friend or your worst enemy!



When you desire to learn and do God’s Word, your dopamine pathway works to focus your emotions and attention on accomplishing the godly goal:

“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” 1Peter 2:2



When you desire to learn and do something ungodly, your dopamine pathway works to focus your emotions and attention on accomplishing it:

“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” James 1:14,15

Your prefrontal cortex needs help from the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to win your spiritual battles:

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another...” Galatians 5:16,17

Your Brain is Designed to Pursue! 8.



Your brain is not built like the frog's, who sits and waits for things to come to him!

Your brain is designed to pursue, acquire and do things you like.



“The reward pathway is considered a dopamine pathway, because dopamine is the primary chemical used to communicate between neurons.

So, things in our environment that can activate this pathway, causing dopamine release, will likely be things we like and that we are motivated to pursue. Foods, physical touch, sex, music, winning games or competitions, playing video games, getting money, etc. can activate your brain's dopamine reward pathway.” Dr. Tiffany Rogers Rogers

Your Brain is Designed to Pursue! 8.



The key is to direct your dopamine to pursue God:

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us,

as many as are mature, have this mind...” Philippians 3:14,15

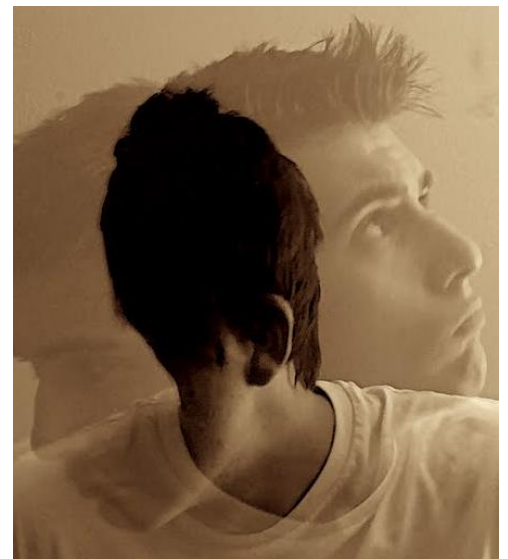


A divided dopamine pathway will drive you nuts: It is wanting God and the things of the world at the same time:

“Wars and fights come . . . from your desires for pleasures . . . You lust and do not have . . . You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures . . . Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? James 4:1-4

How to unite a “double-minded” dopamine pathway:

“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you . . . and purify your hearts, you double-minded . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” James 4:7-10



The normal pattern of dopamine release looks something like a roller coaster, because in biology what goes up must come down.



Free Medical Education (adapted)



So, let's say you're hungry. Dopamine will start rising. Then you think about a burger, and it rises more.

It rises even more when you smell and hear the burger sizzling. Dopamine peaks right about your first bite. Then you take some more bites, and it starts to drop off. Finally, it drops back down to normal levels, and you're full.

Free Medical Education (adapted)

The spiritual motivation God provides is not like a roller coaster. Spirituality will keep your heart satisfied:



“And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”
John 6:35



Your brain is hard-wired to desire food. You choose to desire spiritual things!

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6

Regarding ungodly desires, our dopamine pathway needs God’s help:

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28,29

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

You can have a spike of dopamine just by ordering dessert. Even though you haven't finished what's on your plate, dessert is something new.



Free Medical Education (adapted)

As we've mentioned before, dopamine is released in response to expectations rather than actual levels of pleasure. It's the drive to get it. It's the craving. The pleasure is caused by an opioid brain chemical.



Free Medical Education (adapted)

Beware of worldly riches and pleasure spikes that will hijack your motivation for spiritual maturity:

“Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.” Luke 8:14



Do not love (crave) the world: “Do not love the world or the things in the world . . . For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes . . . is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it...” 1 John 2:15-17

Love God: “Jesus said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37



In fact, dopamine surging in your reward circuitry can override your feelings of what's called satiety or fullness. This is when you stop liking something but still want it.

Free Medical Education (adapted)



The rise of dopamine levels could also represent anything new or novel, because dopamine loves novelty. A new car, a just released movie, the latest gadget. We're all hooked on dopamine.

Free Medical Education (adapted)

You can learn how to prevent this kind of dopamine pathway take-over:

“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content . . . Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:11-13



Spiritual riches are much more exciting than any thing this world has to offer:

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” 1 Timothy 6:17



The Power of Your Thoughts



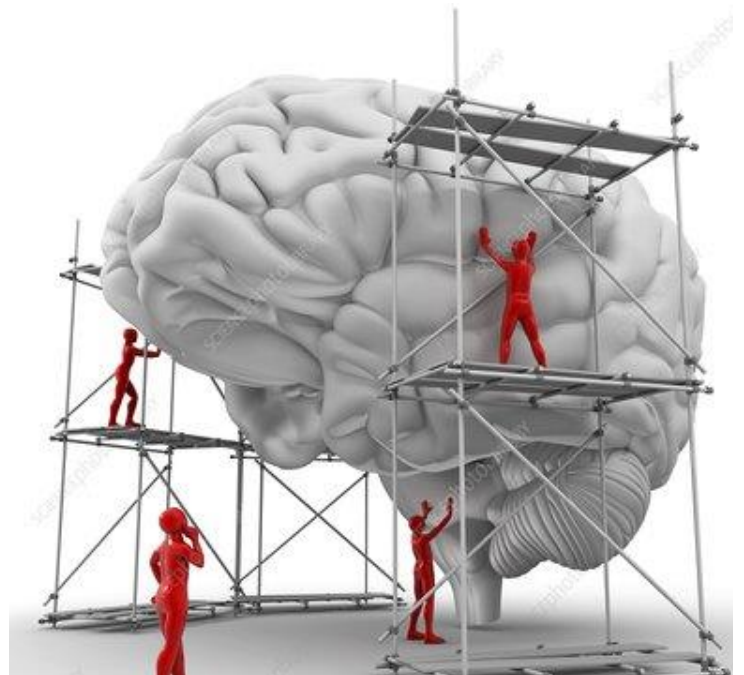
The power of your thoughts has been studied at Harvard Medical School.

Neurologist Alvaro Pascual-Leone instructed a group of volunteers to practice a five-finger piano exercise for two hours a day over five days.

After a week, tests showed that the area of their brains devoted to the piano finger movements had expanded like dandelions spreading on a lawn. However, Pascual-Leone didn't stop there. He extended the experiment to another group, asking them merely to think about the piano practice exercise without moving their fingers.

The test data showed that the same area of their brains had expanded in the same way, proving that mental practice (thought) is just as powerful as physical practice.

Dr. Brad Harrub, Neuroscientist



The Power of God's Word in Your Thoughts



God's Word is designed to reside in your brain (heart, soul, mind):

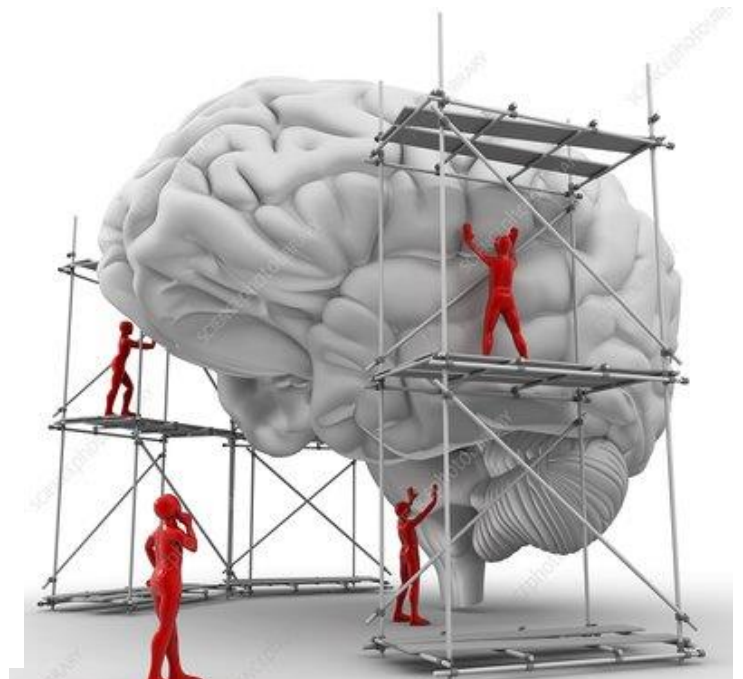
“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

Your brain needs God's Word to function well:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16,17

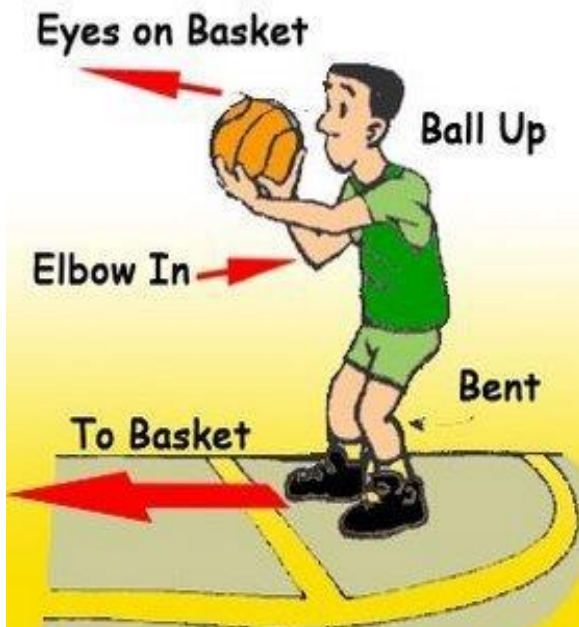
**“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
Romans 10:17**

**“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”
Matthew 4:4**



Your Brain is Extremely Efficient! 13.

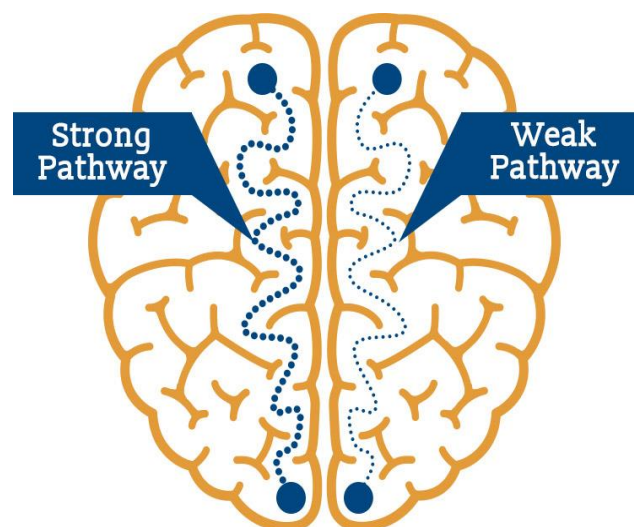
(tasks become skills; skills become instincts/second nature)



Say you're learning how to shoot a free-throw. If it's your first time doing it, you don't yet have a pathway for that movement in your brain. When you're first learning, your brain is like a forest full of trees and dense foliage with no clear pathway between point A and point B. Halo Sports

In order to improve your free-throw, you need to refine and strengthen the free-throw pathway in your brain. The way you do that is through practice. Practice gradually widens the trail through the trees (increases the muscle memory in your brain).

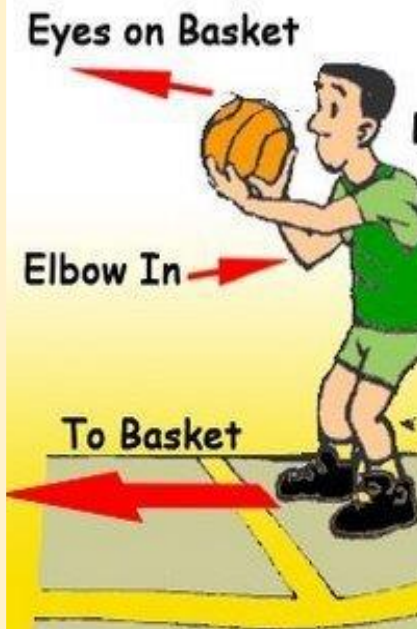
Eventually with enough practice, what started as a trail has become a full-blown highway. Now, you're a master, draining almost every free-throw and the movement is completely second nature (instinctual) Halo Sports



Your Brain is Extremely Efficient!

13.

(with practice, we build good and bad pathways)



“Conformed” refers to a worldly brain pathway.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

“Transformed” and “renewing” refer to building new godly pathways in your mind.

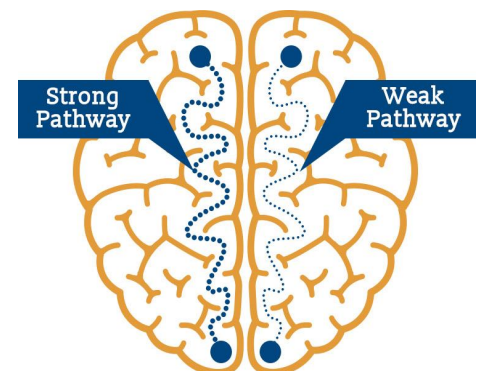
“Put off” refers to abandoning a sinful pathway.

“That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24

“Put on” refers to beginning to build a godly pathway.

Faith & love are spiritual pathways that grow with practice:

“...Your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other.” 2 Thessalonians 1:3






Steph Curry, as a boy, practiced basketball from sun-up to sundown. A boy who lived on the same block ran the streets doing drugs. The brains of both of these boys became very efficient (addicted/instinctual) at two very different skills. Basketball blessed Steph's life, while the skill of addiction ruined the boy's life!



The 2 Types of Brain Plasticity


What is Neuroplasticity (aka Brain Plasticity)?



Brain's ability to change and adapt

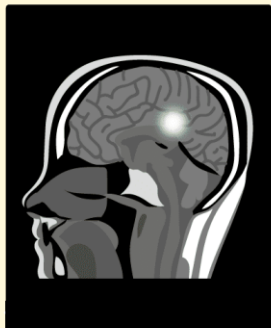
verywell

Type 1: Structural Plasticity



Experiences or memories change a brain's physical structure

Type 2: Functional Plasticity



Brain functions move from damaged area to undamaged area



The human brain is designed to become addicted (turn skills into second nature/instincts):

“Slaves of sin” refers to learning and practicing sinful activities until they become second nature (an addiction):

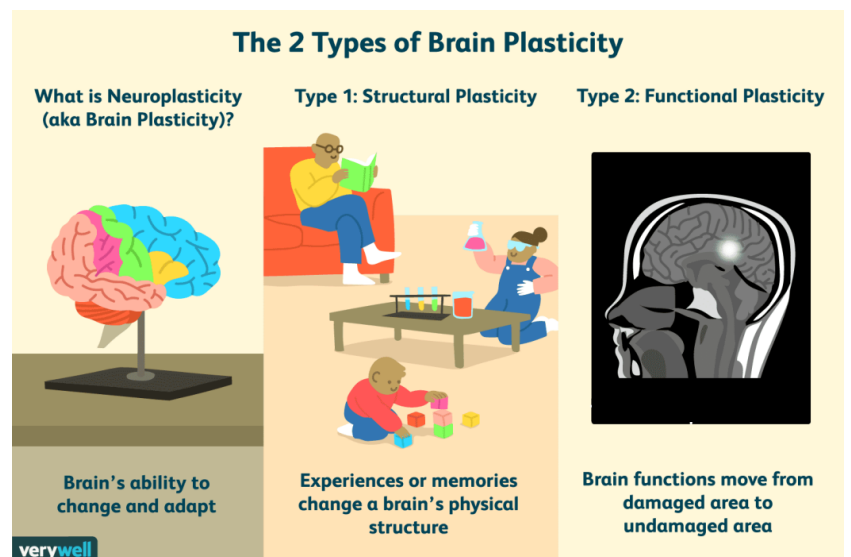


**“...Though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”
Romans 6:17,18**

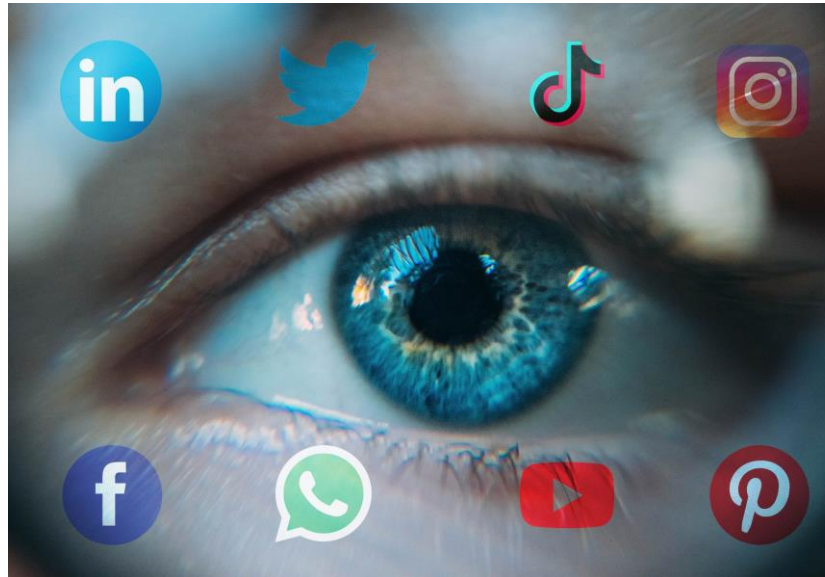
“Slaves of righteousness” refers to learning and practicing Christian principles until they become second nature (an addiction):

Your “inward man” is your brain (heart, soul, mind):

**“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.”
2 Corinthians 4:16**



The World's Battle For Your Eyeballs



Former Facebook, Pinterest, Google, and YouTube engineers made the following comments on the **Netflix** documentary, **The Social Dilemma**.

“Never before in history have 50 designers, 20 to 35 year old, white guys in California, made decisions that would have an impact on two billion people.

**Impact Of
Social Media
On
Students**



Two billion people will have thoughts that they didn't intend to have, because of Google, Facebook, SnapChat, etc.”

(The Social Dilemma)

The World's Battle For Your Eyeballs 15.



Understanding Scriptures about your heart, soul and mind will help you have a strong relationship with God. Learning brain science about your dopamine pathway and the efficiency of your brain will help you understand Scriptures about your mind:

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” Proverbs 4:23

“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.” Proverbs 20:5 (ESV)

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Ephesians 5:15-17

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8,9

Impact Of
Social Media
On
Students





There are only two industries that describe their customers as **USERS**: The illegal drug trade and the social media industry! Our attention is being sold to social media advertisers.



A magician understands some part of our mind that we're not aware of. This is what makes the illusion work. Doctors, lawyers, people who know how to build 747s or nuclear missiles, don't know how their own minds are vulnerable to social media.

This is a separate discipline and it's a discipline that applies to all human beings. From that perspective, you can have a very different understanding of what technology is doing.

The Social Dilemma on Netflix



“You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.” 2 Peter 3:17



The devil is using the same strategy today that he used to hijack Adam & Eve's dopamine pathway:

**“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”
2 Corinthians 11:3**

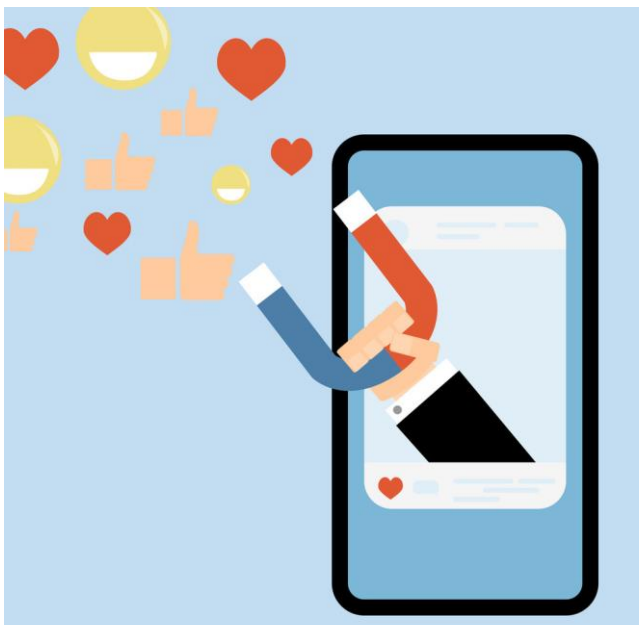
“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11

The World's Battle For Your Eyeballs 17.



Every time you see your phone on the counter and just look at it, you know, if you reach over, it just might have something for you. That's not by accident. That's a design technique.

The Social Dilemma on Netflix



We feel good about ourselves because we get rewarded (releases of dopamine) activated by Facebook Hearts, Likes and Thumbs Up. Then, this technology forces us into this vicious cycle where we think, “what's the next thing I need to do for that reward (dopamine).”

The Social Dilemma on Netflix

The World's Battle For Your Eyeballs 17.



“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything.” 1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)

We should be careful not to lust at immodestly dressed women:

"I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?" Job 31:1

Women should be careful to dress modestly:

“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:28

