

Your Mind Matters

Preserve Your Brain Health for Your Best Life



FEATURED ARTICLE

Two Powerful Ways to Rewire Your Brain for Joy

Did you know that there's a difference between happiness and joy? You might think these emotions are synonymous with the other but they are not mutually exclusive.

Happiness is a transient, externally-triggered feeling, directly related to people, places and events that are a part of any given moment.

Joy is an internal feeling of peace with who, why and where you are. It is less transitory and is not related to external factors.

Joy is unconscious, automatic. It is a perspective that simply "is" or "isn't"and what's most exciting, is that you can actually teach your brain to feel it!

Here are two simple ways to begin changing our perspective in a way that will bring joy into our lives.

1. *Quiet Your Mind* – Stress with faster heart rate and breathing seem to be the "new normal" for most of us. We don't even think about our stress levels anymore, and this affects everything from our sleep to our ability to focus.

The next time you can carve out an hour for yourself, try going to a quiet place like a park, or even take a walk through your neighborhood where you can think more clearly. Notice the breeze, the sounds, the scents in the air. Try focusing your attention on what makes you feel joyful in the moment rather than what is lacking in your life. There are free walking meditations online that may help if you need some guidance to help you focus.

2. *Keep a Daily Gratitude Journal* – A daily practice of gratitude is a concept that is "simple" but not "easy". It is a habit that must be cultivated and for some, squeezed into an already busy day.

However, it is one of the most powerful tools around for rewiring the brain for joy. For the rewire, simply keep a running list of items that make you feel grateful and add a line for "why" they make you feel that way.

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Write three to five items in both the morning and the evening (of course, you can always write more).

The extra line in your gratitude journal where you write down *why these items make you feel this joyful* is especially important. It's easy to make a list of items on a page but unless you also write the "why", you will not experience the joy that these things in your life make you feel.

And the feeling of joy is what we're going for!

The items on your gratitude list do not need to be big-ticket items. Small things like that first delicious sip of hot coffee in the morning or just the wonderful feeling of a cool breeze in the middle of the summer is enough to spark the feeling of joy. You will find that you become more appreciative, more trusting of those around you and more

peaceful. You will find that you take the time to appreciate yourself and others. You'll handle adversity with less stress and better perspective. And you'll discover that you have more resilience to recharge and give more of yourself, when you need to.

Most importantly, you'll finally experience the ability to feel joy, that constant "state of being" that is no longer about what you're receiving from the outside world, but what you are perceiving about yourself.

May you experience all of the joy that life has to offer.

By Marilyn Abrahamson - Brain-Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health.

BRAIN HEALTH MINUTE

FIVE MINUTES OF PRESENCE TO START YOUR DAY

When you wake up tomorrow morning, try something a little different.

Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Notice the full breath as it moves in, and then again, as you breathe out. Do this for two or three minutes as you begin your day.

As you do this, think about your positive intentions for the day – to let go of resentment, to give to others with compassion and love, to live your best life.

Repeating these intentions each morning and with each breath taken in the present moment will help you start the day on a positive note.

For more information about brain health or caregiver support please visit the **Ceresti Brain Health Education portal** at brainhealth.ceresti.com and enter code **BRAIN2022**.

GROW YOUR BRAIN

Grow Your Brain While Brushing Your Teeth

You've probably heard it before... *brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand because it's good for your brain.*

This is one of the most well-known Neurobic exercises but do you know why?

It's because we need to light up neglected neural pathways in our brains to keep them active. Lower levels of activity equal brain shrinkage. By making new connections, we can keep our brains **big and voluminous** for the long haul!

At first, you'll feel the lack of coordination but each day you practice, it will get a little easier than the day before. That's how you'll know new connections are being made in your brain!

***All of the Neurobic exercises in the Grow Your Brain section of the Your Mind Matters Newsletters are based on excerpts from the book "Keep Your Brain Alive" by Dr. Lawrence Katz and Manning Rubin. Workman Publishing, New York.*

TAKING CARE OF YOU

Prioritize Your Nutrition

When time is limited, it's tempting to reach for processed foods that are ready to grab-and-go. These foods often have added sugars and unhealthy fats that may contribute to digestive issues and a weakened immune system.

To keep up your energy and resilience, it's important to make your own nutrition a priority. Here are some tips to make it happen:

- Limit intake of soda, caffeinated coffee and alcohol
- Sip water frequently throughout the day to stay hydrated
- Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and proteins every day, avoiding processed sugar and carbohydrates
- Instead of eating two or three larger meals that may cause you to rush which can cause discomfort, eat five or six smaller meals staggered throughout the day

Healthy eating habits will not only give you more energy and resilience, it will help you cope with adversity in the short run and help you avoid your own future health problems down the road.

As a supplemental benefit of your health plan, you have access to a caregiver support program available through Ceresti Health at no cost to you.
 To determine if you are eligible for this program, contact: (877) 222-5055.

MONTHLY BRAIN CHALLENGE

Riddles



Just for fun, here are some brain teasers for you to ponder.

1. What word begins and ends with an E but only has one letter?
2. What type of cheese is made backward?
3. I'm tall when I'm young and I'm short when I'm old. What am I?
4. In a one-story pink house, there was a pink person, a pink cat, a pink fish, a pink computer, a pink chair, a pink table, a pink telephone, a pink shower — everything was pink! What color were the stairs?
5. First, I threw away the outside and cooked the inside. Then I ate the outside and threw away the inside. What did I eat?
6. Mike is a butcher. He is 5-foot-10-inches tall. What does he weigh?
7. What are the next three letters in the following sequence? J, F, M, A, M, J, J, A, __, __, __
8. Before Mt. Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?
9. You are driving a bus. At the first stop, two women get on. At the second stop, three men get on, and one woman gets off. At the third stop, three kids and their mom get on, and a man gets off. The bus is grey, and it is raining outside. What color is the bus driver's hair?
10. Imagine that you are in a boat, in the middle of the sea. Suddenly, you are surrounded by hungry sharks, just waiting to feed on you. How can you put an end to this?

ANSWERS

1. Envelope
2. Edam
3. Candle
4. It was a one-story house so there were no stairs
5. Corn on the cob
6. Meat
7. S, O, N. The sequence is the first letter of the months of the year: September, October, and November are the next in the sequence.
8. Mt. Everest. It was still the highest in the world. It just had not been discovered yet!
9. Whatever color your hair is! Remember, you are the bus driver!
10. Stop imagining!