

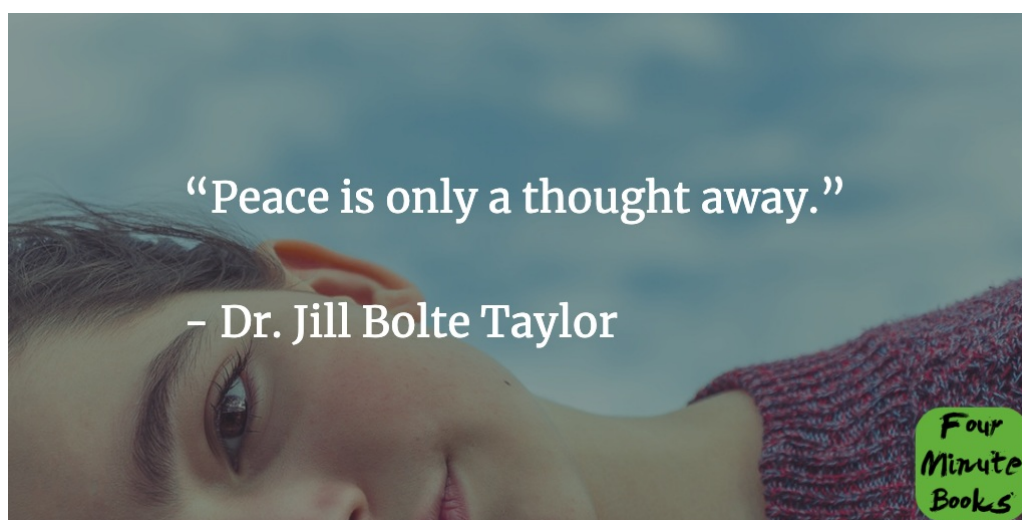
My Stroke Of Insight Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *My Stroke Of Insight* teaches you how to calm yourself anytime by simply tuning into the inherent peacefulness of the right side of the brain.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



When accomplished neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor was just 37 years old, she suffered a stroke out of the blue. It was caused by a malformation she'd unknowingly had since birth and bathed the left side of her brain in hemorrhaged blood for hours.

Taylor first noticed a headache upon waking, but soon found herself descending into an increasingly bizarre psychological state. She became a spectator of her own body which, unsurprisingly, led to trouble in moving around and performing ordinary activities.

Despite the mounting effects of the stroke, Taylor managed to call a colleague, who immediately put her into medical care. She spent about 8 years recovering from her injury, which she now considers a transformative experience.

Rather than debilitating her, the left-sided stroke and resulting brain damage revealed to Taylor the power of the unharmed right side of her brain. As it turns out, it can be an immense source of psychological poise and serenity.

In *My Stroke Of Insight*, she tells the whole story and explains how we can tap into this source of calmness and peace ourselves.

Here are 3 great lessons I've learned from the book:

1. The human brain has tremendous potential to heal and change itself.
2. The left side of your brain is noisy, while the right side is peaceful.
3. You can choose how to feel in any given moment.

Sometimes, you really do have to learn things for yourself. Thankfully, suffering a traumatic

brain injury to get better at mindfulness isn't one of them. Let's see how Taylor's hard-won wisdom can teach us about the happiness hidden within every human mind!

Lesson 1: Your brain can heal and change in amazing ways.

You know from the beginning of this book that Taylor must have recovered reasonably well from her stroke. After all, she wrote *a book*! Yet it still feels surprising that anyone could survive, let alone thrive, with such a brain injury.

Luckily, most of us won't face a stroke or similar in our lifetime. Still, there's huge value in the simple observation that human brains can heal and change dramatically. **Called "neuroplasticity," this property means that from birth to death our brains are always changing and learning.**

Better yet, *how* your brain changes and *what* it learns is largely up to you. At first, Taylor felt hesitant about leaving the experiences of her stroke-damaged mind behind to rejoin the regular world. But once she set her mind to it, her recovery proceeded quickly.

If people with literal brain damage can so often regain the abilities they've lost and even continue to develop new ones, imagine what *you* can do with a fully functioning, healthy brain.

Lesson 2: You feel like just one person, but your brain really has two totally different parts.

You may have read in a textbook or heard in a lecture that the human brain has two separate and very different sides. The left side of our brains deals with language and numbers. It allows us to see patterns and perceive time in the world. The right brain is responsible for sensory perception and the big picture in the present moment.

But in the abstract, this whole two-sides stuff is hard to take seriously. And why does it even matter that our brains have two different sides?

Taylor's experience with a one-sided brain injury drives the point home. With her left brain mostly out of function by the stroke, Taylor discovered that she felt calm and totally in touch with the world. **Because her right side was in charge, she was now neither scared about the present, nor fearful for the future.**

Most of us enjoy the luxury of a well-integrated brain. But, like Taylor, we must realize that our brains are actually complex entities, trying to fulfill a variety of hugely disparate goals. Evolution made the human brain this way, cobbling together lower and higher functions over time, and it shows.

Lesson 3: You can opt out of many negative emotions and choose to feel mostly the positive ones instead.

Speaking of “mindfulness” like a character trait makes it seem like it’s a quality people either possess or lack. Meditation gurus have it, and everyone else doesn’t, right? Maybe, with enough practice, we can cultivate our measly powers of mindfulness into more robust ones.

Well, Taylor’s stroke experience suggests a different way of looking at mindfulness. **If a sense of peace, wholeness, and calm simply comes from the right side of the brain, then mindfulness is actually within you all along.** This stays true whether you’ve ever meditated or not, whether you’ve ever deliberately undertaken mindfulness exercises or not.

This is what Taylor means when she insists that “peace is only a thought away.” If you take to heart that the special orientation of the right brain is always there for you, you’ll feel more confident in accessing it at times when you badly need an emotional breather or a reality check. You don’t have to wait until you’ve developed a special new mindfulness talent.

You can choose to visit that mental place *right now*.

My Stroke Of Insight Review

My Stroke Of Insight straddles the line between science and self-help. Between the compact summary of how the human brain works, the gripping tale of Taylor’s life-threatening injury, and the nearly unbelievable description of her remarkable recovery, there’s something in here for everyone. While Taylor does tend to downplay how difficult it can be to tap into our right brain peace of mind, there’s something comforting about the thought that it’s lying in wait.

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Who would I recommend My Stroke Of Insight summary to?

The skeptical 32-year old who hasn’t quite bought into “mindfulness” practices, the 50-year old who’s burned out emotionally but isn’t sure whether it’s possible to make a radical psychological change, and anyone who feels semi-spiritual but would like some science to back it up.