

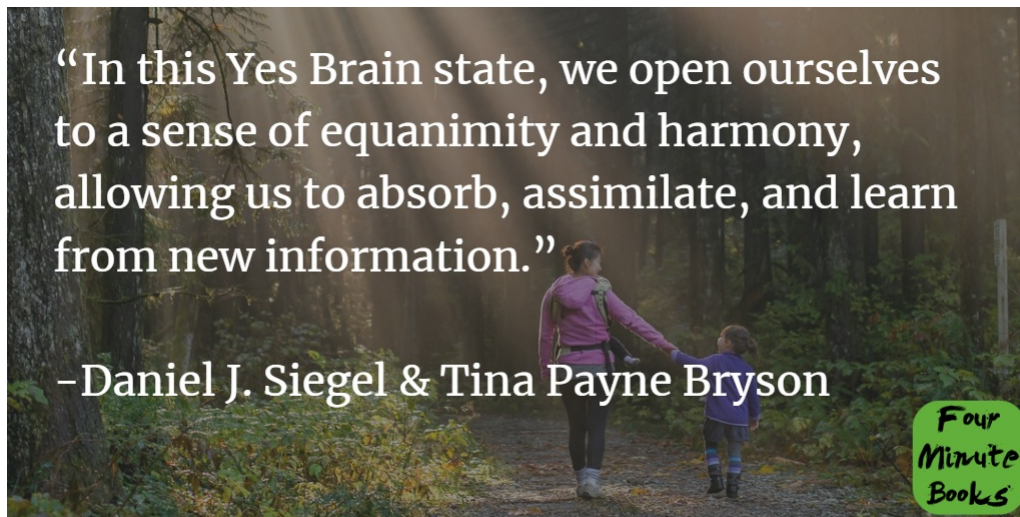
The Yes Brain Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Yes Brain* offers a variety of parenting techniques for encouraging kids to develop an open attitude towards life, via the key traits of balance, resilience, insight, and empathy.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Parents want all the good things in life for their kids, like health, wealth, happiness. In today's fast-paced world, though, it can be a little unclear how to get those. The old routes of college and marriage don't seem to be working as well as in previous years. What's a parent to do? How can we point kids in the right direction when we don't know where to go ourselves?

People of all ages can best cope with life when they remain open to its challenges and opportunities. We need to have a "yes" attitude rather than hunkering down into defensiveness and resistance.

In *The Yes Brain: How to Cultivate Courage, Curiosity and Resilience in Your Child*, mental health professionals Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson provide some thoughtful ways for promoting the "yes" qualities of balance, resilience, insight, and empathy in kids. These may sound like fuzzy traits, but according to Siegel and Bryson, there are specific actions you can take to develop them in yourself and your kids.

Here are 3 of my favorite lessons this book teaches about raising kids:

1. Children can learn self-control even from an early age.

2. Learning to see things from other's perspectives is a superpower.
3. Selfishness is typical in kids, but they can outgrow it.

In many ways, the present and future are better than the past. It's pretty unfortunate that parents have become so intimidated by the task of preparing their kids for adult life. Let's discover how to make parenting a little less scary with concrete strategies for helping children grow!

Lesson 1: Help little kids develop self-control even when they're young.

Sometimes young children are demanding little barbarians. Worse, it seems that we're just stuck with them like that until some distant time when they magically decide to start behaving in a civilized manner. While the path to becoming self-disciplined is indeed a long one, it can be traveled in baby steps – beginning right now.

Sigel and Bryson suggest using a “zones” system for talking about emotions with children. In the “green zone,” the child is feeling pretty good. “Red zone” is for anger, anxiety, or fear. And the “blue zone” is for sadness and similar emotions.

When a child or even an adult finds herself in the red or blue zone, she can predict that her emotions are threatening to get the better of her. Young children can try basic mindfulness techniques like taking some deep breaths to get back into the green zone. Instead of becoming a victim of her swirling emotions, the child can choose whether to follow where they're leading her.

Even if the child doesn't prevent herself from blowing up or melting down, a kid's sense of self-awareness still benefits from this kind of introspection. Over time, her capacities of self-control may expand more quickly than they otherwise would have.

Lesson 2: Adopting another's perspective changes everything.

Another path to developing insight involves simply imagining that you are someone else, like a neutral bystander. When we see things only from our own eyes, it's too easy to neglect the interests and needs of others. But, by trying on the observer standpoint, we can begin to see that a situation may not involve clear-cut “right” and “wrong” after all.

The sooner kids figure out that the world doesn't revolve around them, the better. Even when they are only a few years old, children need to get along with other kids to thrive.

This doesn't have to be a harsh lesson, though! Plenty of time to socialize and freely play with others can give kids opportunities to learn it naturally, such as by anticipating the social consequences of their actions.

Learning to take another's perspective may help kids treat *themselves* more kindly, too. Failure can feel so terrible at the time, and developing the resilience to bounce back is hard. But, from the outside looking in, failure can appear to be just another step along the path to success.

Lesson 3: **It's normal for your kids to be selfish, but you can help them outgrow it.**

It's common to think of very young humans as incapable of perspective-taking. Yet, research suggests that the human capacity for empathy begins to emerge quite early, sometimes even before the age of 1 year.

You might feel horrified or embarrassed when your child behaves extremely selfishly. Punishment can seem like the answer. **But, ideally, we want to move kids into the “yes” brain state, where they act calmly from an open attitude, instead of from fear of punishment.**

Rather than punishing a selfish child, you can create opportunities for him to imagine how others are feeling and invite him to experiment with ways of showing care to others. For instance, parents can discuss past or potential future scenarios with their kids, providing an opportunity for role-playing. One way to do this could be helping them pretend they are confronting a bully.

Teaching kids to speak “from the I” can help them also. And, as always, parents can simply act as good role models for their kids. If you wouldn't want your kid doing it, don't do it yourself!

The Yes Brain Review

I'm not entirely convinced that reading *The Yes Brain* will necessarily enable you to completely transform your child. But there's nothing to lose by trying the simple techniques offered in this book. Siegel and Bryson's 4s's — making kids feel “Safe, Seen, Soothed, and Secure” — are a good starting point for parenting kids, whatever their innate personality starting point.

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Who would I recommend The Yes Brain summary to?

The 40-year old mom of a middle schooler who doesn't like his bad attitude, the 30-year old father of a 4-year-old girl who is shy and fearful, and anyone who works with children.