

PEAK PERFORMANCE, LIFE PURPOSE AND PERSONAL MASTERY

ALL START IN YOUR BRAIN

BY OMOZUA ISIRAMEN

Brain health is a critical piece of overall health and success in life. Your brain function underlies your ability to communicate, make decisions, problem-solve and live a productive, meaningful, and useful life. Because the brain controls so much of our daily functioning, it is arguably the single most valuable organ in the human body. Yet, few of us treat it as such.

YOUR BRAIN INFLUENCES EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE

Every minute of every day, your body is physically reacting, literally changing, in response to the thoughts that run through your brain. It's been proven that just thinking about something causes your brain to release neurotransmitters, chemical messengers that allow it to communicate with parts of itself and your nervous system. Neurotransmitters control virtually all of your body's functions, from hormones to digestion to feeling happy. sad, or stressed.

This fact can help you or hurt you.

Studies have shown that thoughts alone can improve vision, fitness, and strength. The placebo effect, as observed with fake operations and sham drugs, for example, works because of the power of our brains to affect our bodies. Expectancies and learned associations have been shown to change brain chemistry and circuitry which results in real physiological and cognitive outcomes, such as less fatigue, lower immune system reaction, elevated hormone levels, and reduced anxiety.

On the other hand, your mental activity can also hurt you.

Negative attitudes and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness can create chronic stress, which upsets the body's hormone balance. depletes the brain chemicals required for happiness, and

damages the immune system. Science shows that chronic stress can actually decrease your lifespan by harming your DNA. Poorly managed or repressed anger is also related to many health conditions, such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, digestive disorders, infections, and more.

So, why not support and encourage your brain and mental health and use this reality to help you?

HELP YOUR BRAIN REACH PEAK PERFORMANCE

Drs. Jeff Browne and Marke Fenske write in their book, The Winner's Brain: 8 Strategies Great Minds Use to Achieve Success:

"Contrary to popular belief, winning in life has little to do with IQ, your circumstances, your financial resources, or even luck. But, it has everything to do with creating a failureresistant brain. Every time you think a thought, feel an emotion, or execute a behavior, your neuro-circuitry changes, and the good news is you can take charge of this process."

Rising to your level of peak performance requires achieving a level of self-awareness and optimizing your brain health and function. According to Browne and Fenske, a winner's brain has a healthy sense of self-awareness which allows them to be more efficient in every part of their life from the job to relationships. When а person knows themselves well, they are able to better relate to the rest of the world and vice versa. A winner's brain has a stable and consistent sense of self, regardless of circumstances, which can be developed through mindfulness practices.

I heard the following statement at a TED Talk and it has stuck with me in all I do ever since.



"Understand that everything you do, everything you encounter, and everything you experience is changing your brain - be intentional about what you expose it to and take brain awareness seriously - because your brain can change for better or for worse.."

Everything starts with the brain and it is the most accurate point of departure to start any change or transformation plan. Whatever a person can achieve starts with how neuro-agile he or she is.

Having brain awareness and an accurate understanding of your neuro design drawn from the insights you get on completing a neuro agility profile helps you confidently manage stress, build the brain you want, and live life fully.

Do you ever stop when you feel overwhelmed to gain awareness and assess what is going on in a resourceful way?

A simple way to start becoming more aware is through the S.T.O.P. exercise. Next time you find yourself overly emotional and you want to calm down or your mind jumping around when you need to focus:

- S Stop what you are doing, put things down for a minute, or physically walk away.
- T Take a breath. A slow inhale with an even slower exhale will calm your nervous system.
- O Observe your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Don't judge or react, just observe.
- P Proceed in a healthy way that helps you move forward positively at that moment.

Your brain will also work better if you support and nourish it with healthy lifestyle habits.

Here are a few elements to optimize and encourage your brain's peak performance in the order of importance:

- Exercise regularly. The first thing I tell my clients is to keep exercising. ...
- Get plenty of sleep. Sleep plays an important role in your brain health. ...
- Monitor your attitude and what drives it. ...
- Eat a Mediterranean diet. ...
- Stay mentally active. ...
- Remain socially involved.

YOUR BRAIN FUNCTIONS BETTER WHEN IT HAS A PURPOSE

Purpose, defined as the tendency to derive meaning from life's experiences and possess a sense of intentionality and goal-directedness that guides behavior, can be quantified and developed. Surprisingly, neuroscience research has linked 'living a meaningful life' to having a robust brain and mental health. With purpose and meaning comes positive emotions — love, compassion, and appreciation — which counteract stress and support a healthy brain. Purpose in life has been linked to positive health outcomes including:

- better mental health
- less depression
- happiness
- satisfaction
- personal growth, self-acceptance
- better sleep
- longevity

HOW TO FIND YOUR PURPOSE

There are many ways to find your purpose in life. This article, Start finding your purpose and unlock your best life, suggests the following:

- 1. Develop a growth mindset. Having a growth mindset is linked to having a sense of purpose.
- 2. Create a personal vision statement.
- 3. Give back.
- 4. Practice gratitude.
- 5. Turn your pain into purpose.
- 6. Explore your passions.





- 7. Be part of a community.
- 8. Spend time with people who inspire you.
- 9. Read.
- 10. Join a cause.
- 11. Practice self-acceptance.
- 12. Take time for self-care.

Mark Sisson wrote about finding your life's purpose in his article Does Life Purpose Enhance Longevity? I like his advice on how to find your purpose:

"...do the list making, the rational weighing, the free form brainstorming that experts suggest. Reflect on your passions, your priorities, your values, your talents, and temperament. Consider where all of these can intersect with the needs you see in the circles or society around you. Talk to friends. Take a stab at writing a personal mission statement if you're so inclined. Mull on the question while you're washing dishes. Fill your head with the possibilities, the pros and drawbacks, the complexities, and the ambiguities. But then move out of cerebral mode entirely, get out of your own way, and hand the question over to your intuitive self."

Personally, I find there's nothing more conducive to intuitive thinking than solo time outdoors... Think about the question once - and only once - as you head out "into the wild" for your mini retreat. Then forget about it for the day. Just be and do and watch and smell and head home when you're good and ready...."

PERSONAL MASTERY

Personal Mastery is the process of living and working purposefully towards a vision, in alignment with your values, and being open to constantly learning about yourself and the world. You can think of personal mastery as self-leadership where a person consciously chooses their behaviors. To do this requires self-awareness, self-management, personal growth. To know yourself and live an

authentic life requires the awareness that you have been operating from mental models about yourself and a reality that is the product of your unique brain and past.

At its core, personal mastery is really about emotional intelligence.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

In the article, This Is How Emotional Intelligence Gives You an Edge in Sales and Negotiations, I write:

Emotional intelligence also referred to as emotional quotient (EQ), is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, and those of the people around you. People with a high degree of EQ know what they're feeling, what their emotions mean, and how these emotions can affect other people.

Emotional intelligence is often confused with personality, but personality has very little to do with it, surprisingly. EQ is also different from IQ and shows no correlation to it in studies. IQ, your ability to learn, is highly genetic and stays fairly constant throughout your life. El is a skill that you can learn and develop."

EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENCE CHANGES YOUR BRAIN

Science has noted physical changes that correlate with emotional intelligence, such as higher gray matter volume in the frontal cortex. Other research shows a strong overlap between general and emotional intelligence in the brain suggesting that intelligence and emotions are not opposites, but rather two types of intelligence or, perhaps, two aspects of one intelligence.



Personal mastery means reaching your highest level in both and doing the work that your brain requires consistently. Taking care of and supporting your brain will help you achieve personal mastery, and personal mastery improves your brain.



CONCLUSION

You will be more likely to accomplish your goals, live a purposeful life, and reach your peak level of performance and personal mastery if you put your brain to work for you. Brain health is a vital component of every aspect of your overall health, happiness, and success in life. A life that is yours and in which you thrive literally starts in your brain, so make being neuro-agile a priority as everything starts with the brain in life, relationships, and business.

CONTRIBUTING WRITER'S PROFILE



Omozua Isiramen is a Neuroscience Transformation & Peak Performance Specialist who provides sales professionals, business consultants, executives, and leaders with a comprehensive methodology to decode their own unique brain signatures so they can elevate their personal and professional lives in all areas by attaining neuro agility and emotional mastery.

Her Programs, Brainification and The ManYOUfest Code help individuals and teams to develop brain fitness and mental flexibility to have a fast, flexible, and focused mind to reach their potential.

