

Your Powerful Brain

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A sneak preview of a brand new chapter from:
Having It All: Achieving Your Life's Goals and Dreams

Chapter 3

Your Powerful Brain

You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created.

— *Albert Einstein*

Your brain—that three-pound hunk of matter located between your ears—is the most sophisticated, complex, and miraculous piece of equipment ever known to humankind. It controls everything you see, say, feel, and do. With such a powerful tool at your disposal, isn't it your responsibility to understand how it works and how to make it work optimally?

Let's start with some fundamentals.

First, it's important to understand that you are nothing but energy. If you took a high-powered microscope and looked at the smallest, most fundamental pieces of matter—not atoms, protons, and electrons, but the minuscule neutrons, gluons, quarks, and mesons that these subatomic particles are made of—you would see nothing but little bits of electromagnetic vibrating waves of light. Those bits are what you're made of, and your brain controls the vibration of every one of them.

Second, it's important to know that your brain can grow new brain cells (or neurons) in a process called neurogenesis. Not so long ago, scientists believed that people were hardwired or born with genetic predispositions and makeup. But now when someone says, "That's just the way I am, this is the way I was born," we know they're only half right. While genetic predisposition accounts for about half of your internal

programming, the other fifty percent comes from behaviors, perceptions, beliefs, and habits you may have learned as far back as childhood and conditioned into your brain. Here's the good news: by understanding how your brain works, you can change your old conditioning and tap into your brain's inherent genius to achieve your goals and dreams.

OLD BRAIN, NEW BRAIN

Let's get started by taking a quick look at three important parts of the brain.

The brainstem, located near the top of the neck, is also called the "reptilian" brain because it is similar to the brains of cool-blooded reptiles. It controls many of the body's instinctive functions, such as breathing.

The "old mammalian" brain is similar to the brains of other warm-blooded mammals. It controls emotions and sexuality and plays a key role in memory.

The frontal lobe makes up thirty-five to forty percent of the human brain. Interestingly, a chimpanzee's frontal lobe consists of about seventeen percent of its brain, a dog's accounts for about seven percent, and a cat's for only about three percent.

Back in the caveman days, early humans relied on their mammalian and reptilian brains. Those parts of the brain have been overlapped with the new part of the brain called the frontal lobe, and that is the part that connects us to the field of all possibilities. The frontal lobe is like a CEO or orchestra leader, responsible for focus, concentration, learning, and observation. Unfortunately, the average person loses focus an average of seven to ten times every minute. For your brain to interact with the quantum field, you need to activate your frontal lobe. This is the area that will connect you to what you want. It will also allow you to block distractions from your consciousness.

So, how do you access the frontal lobe? You do it by meditating and controlling your ability to focus. Meditation gives you the ability to learn how to focus inwardly, thereby activating the frontal lobe. When you meditate, you're not only accessing your personality and the universe, you're also teaching yourself how to connect to the quantum field that contains all the intelligence and information you want. You'll learn more about meditation in chapter 10.

BRAIN PLASTICITY

Brain plasticity, otherwise known as neuroplasticity, is the ability of brain cells to make new connections. Right now, as you read this page, your brain cells are making an average of one million new connections per second. Any time you read, think, listen, do, or experience something, you are enhancing the neuroconnections in your brain. As you grow older, it's important to maintain or increase your neuroactivity, because doing so increases your intelligence and your brain's ability to find new answers.

When scientists examined Albert Einstein's brain, they discovered that it wasn't any bigger than most people's. However, it had about twenty to twenty-five percent more neuroconnections than the average human brain.

Your brain's plasticity makes it possible for you to learn new patterns of thought and behavior, once again demonstrating that you are not hardwired as you may have thought. Instead of saying, "That's just the way I am," you can choose to make changes and learn new skills, which will change the neuroconnections in your brain and allow you to perceive and behave differently based on what the new neuroclusters recommend or dictate. What all this really means is that *you are capable of achieving whatever you*

choose. Your job then is to create the new neural connections that will serve your new goals and dreams. Then and only then will it become easier for you to achieve success in any area of your life.

TWO SIDES OF THE BRAIN

In the old days, IQ was considered the one and only benchmark for measuring someone's potential. Unfortunately, IQ looked only at a person's ability to work with words, numbers, and logic—all the functions controlled by the left side of the brain. Today we understand the importance of both sides of the brain—the left and right hemispheres—and of the corpus callosum that links them together.

- The left side emphasizes words, logic, numbers, mathematics, and sequence.
- The right side emphasizes rhyme, rhythm, music, pictures, and imagination.
- The corpus callosum links both.

Some people deal with the world in a logical, methodical, structured way. Others are more conceptual and social. By understanding that both types of people are just tapping into different sides of their brains, you begin to understand that one way is not better than the other and that different people process information differently. With this level of understanding, you may start to give yourself different possibilities, such as eliminating the possible low self-esteem you may have about not being smart enough or good enough.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE

Not only do you have two hemispheres of the brain that function in different ways, but you also have different types of mental abilities that you can use to navigate the world. These mental intelligences are different from IQ, and they're known as *multiple intelligence*. Without going into too much detail, here's an overview of the different types of intelligence and some of the ways each type is demonstrated.

- **Verbal-linguistic intelligence:** People who use this intelligence exhibit sensitivity to the sound, meaning, and order of words. They love to read, talk, listen, and write.
- **Logical-mathematical intelligence:** People who use this intelligence demonstrate ability in mathematics and other complex logical systems. They love to solve problems, reason things out, and think sequentially.
- **Musical-rhythmic intelligence:** Users of this intelligence appreciate, understand, and create music. They love to sing, hum, and tap to music.
- **Visual-spatial intelligence:** These users have the ability to perceive the visual world accurately and re-create (or alter) it in the mind or on paper. They love to imagine, manipulate objects in space, and create art.
- **Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence:** People who demonstrate this type of intelligence use their bodies in a skilled way for self-expression, goal attainment, or entertainment. They love to move and express through movement or action.
- **Interpersonal intelligence:** These users perceive and understand other individuals—their moods, desires, and motivations. They love to communicate, listen, persuade, and negotiate.

- **Intrapersonal intelligence:** People who use this type of intelligence understand their own emotions, values, and personal philosophy. They love to be alone, thinking thoughts and setting internal goals.
- **Naturalist intelligence:** These users recognize flora and fauna, make distinctions in the natural world, and use this ability productively. They are sensitive to nature and their connections and patterns in the world, including in the plant and animal kingdoms.

Each of us can find one or two intelligences in which we naturally excel. Which ones are your strengths? You can use these intelligence types to build on as opposed to downgrading your true worth. When you start to truly believe in your heart that you are worthy and intelligent and you deserve to build whatever you want in any area of your life, you will become that and create that. This is just another piece of the foundation I'm laying to help you understand how powerful you are.

FOUR STAGES OF LEARNING

Psychologists understand that people move through four psychological stages in the process of developing competence in a skill.

The first stage is called *unconscious incompetence*. People at this stage don't understand something and they don't even know that they don't understand. In other words, they don't know what they don't know.

The second stage is called *conscious incompetence*. People at this stage have admitted to themselves and possibly to others that they're incompetent.

People in stage three, *conscious competence*, now understand or know how to do something but it requires a lot of focus and concentration. Conscious competence comes from doing the right things in the right order repeatedly.

The fourth and final stage, *unconscious competence*, is the level you see in professional athletes, musicians, Wall Street traders, and really great parents. They've had so much perfect practice with a skill that it becomes second nature and can be performed effortlessly.

One of the most recent studies about unconscious competence was done in London with laboratory rats. After a hundred tries, the rats could navigate their way through a maze fairly quickly. After two hundred to five hundred repetitions in the same maze, the researchers observed the same ability in the rats' babies. Their genetic imprinting had been changed.

It takes hundreds if not thousands of perfectly repeated attempts to become unconsciously competent. If you want to be perfect at something, it's not enough to do it over and over again. You have to do it *perfectly* over and over again. By the same token, if you repeatedly do the wrong thing over and over again, it can become your competency.

This goes back to the concept of brain plasticity. When you're learning something new, you create one connection of two branches in your brain. When you reinforce the new information by listening to it and applying it again and again, you reinforce the cellular structure or the cellular cluster in your brain to the point that you go from conscious competence to unconscious competence.

Information on its own is worthless unless you take it from conscious competence to unconscious competence. By gathering information and repeating the pattern of thought or behavior again and again so you reinforce the brain itself, you condition the brain to take over and, without any thought, behave in ways that are in line with achieving your goals.

THE RETICULAR ACTIVATION SYSTEM

One of the most important brain functions you can learn to operate is called the reticular activation system, or RAS. If you could look straight through your eyes to the back of your head, near the occipital lobe of your brain, you'd see a network-like group of cells. This is the RAS, a group of cells that work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, sorting through all the sensory information your brain receives. The RAS asks itself one simple question: *Is this something that's important to my owner?* (That's you!)

If the information is not important, meaning it's not something you absolutely want or something that will save your life, the reticular activation system won't make you aware of it. It will just drop the information from your field of consciousness.

If you're worried about something, the RAS will find it for you. For example, if you're worried about not having enough money, or being overweight, or your relationships, or meeting the right person, or bringing in enough business, your RAS will bring forth any information about that subject and make you aware of it. Let's say you're thinking about buying a certain kind of car. Have you ever noticed how you suddenly start seeing that make and model everywhere you look?

Here's another example. When you're looking for a parking space, your RAS scans the entire parking lot for clues that will help you find a spot: somebody walking out of the mall, someone getting into or out of a car, exhaust coming from a tailpipe. Your reticular activation system works around the clock at lightning speed to find everything you want and everything you don't want.

Once you take information from your conscious mind and impress it into your non-conscious mind—your power center—you click on the RAS and it starts finding things you never noticed before. It's no different from when you have your keys on the table and you can't see them, as if you were wearing blinders. Right now, if you're not conditioned for the success you want to achieve, it could be looking you straight in the eye and you will not see it. It will be right in front of you, and you'll be wondering where it's been hiding all this time.

PSYCHO-CYBERNETIC MECHANISM

Many years ago, Maxwell Maltz wrote a book called *Psychocybernetics*. Cybernetics is a word for how a system works and refers to the control-and-response systems found in some machines and animals—such as a thermostat or a missile guidance system.

Let's say we're on a deep sea fishing trip and I point the boat due north. You come up to me and say, "Hey, John, we're not catching any fish. Do you mind if we go somewhere else?" I say, "Sure," and turn the wheel fifteen degrees. The boat starts to turn in a different direction, then suddenly shifts right back again, heading north like it was before. I turn the steering wheel forty degrees this time, so you can clearly see that the

boat is going in a different direction. Just like before, the boat shifts back and heads north again. Now you're starting to get irritated., so I say, "I'll try even harder than I did before." I spin the wheel all the way around and turn the boat in the opposite direction. The boat starts to make a shift, then turns itself north yet again.

Why does this keep happening? Because there's a cybernetic mechanism in this boat. Every time the boat deviates from its preprogrammed course, the cybernetic mechanism sends a signal to the automatic response mechanism to get the boat back onto its programmed course.

In the same way, your brain has a cybernetic mechanism. Because of this mechanism, people win lotteries and then spend all the money. Or they lose weight and then gain it all back. Or they leave one abusive relationship and jump right into another one. Why? Because their thermostat is set at a certain level.

Your expectation points are already set, based on all of your past conditioning. Unless you rewire the program, you'll revert right back to where you were before. Using willpower and persistence will not work. This is where neuroplasticity really works well. You have to take the old brain, the old thermostat, and rewire it. You have to reset your thermostat before you can start seeing and behaving differently.

THE AMYGDALA

Amygdala is a Latin or Greek word that means "almond." Named for its almond shape, your amygdala has tremendous power over your perceptions and actions. The amygdala senses potential and real stress and orders the release of neurotransmitters in response, causing you to feel doubt, fear, and anxiety.

When you are growing or moving to the next level of success in any area of your life, the doubt, fear, and anxiety are absolutely normal. They're caused by the release of a chemical in your brain. When you understand why it's happening, you can recognize it as normal and realize that your brain is doing what it's supposed to do: it's sending you signals so you can make decisions, not trying to stop you in your tracks.

Highly successful people feel the same feelings of fear, doubt, and anxiety that everyone else feels. It's what they do about them that makes them different. When they come up against a failure or something that doesn't work, they don't take it personally. They try something different and they move on.

BRAIN WAVES

Your brain is nothing more than an electrical switching station that picks up frequencies and sends out different frequencies. The state of your brain can be measured by the vibrations it emits, or brain waves.

- **Beta state (14–100 Hz):** These are the fastest of the brain waves and are not conducive to superlearning. This is our day-to-day awake state, when we are alert and working.
- **Alpha state (8–13.9 Hz):** These waves are conducive to relaxation, superlearning, relaxed focus, light trance, increased serotonin production, higher intuitive factors. meditation, and the beginning of access to the non-conscious mind. These waves occur during pre-sleep or pre-waking drowsiness, where access to the quantum field begins.

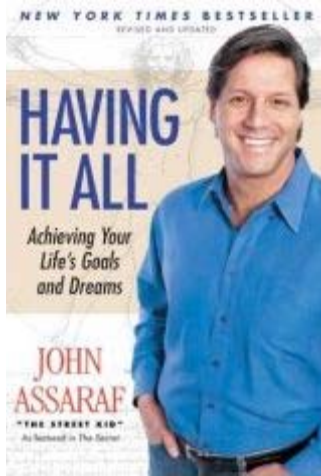
- **Theta state (4–7.9 Hz):** This frequency is conducive to an increased production of catecholamines (vital for learning and memory); increased creativity; integrative, emotional experiences; potential change in behavior; increased retention of learned material; and the potential to tap into universal intelligence. These waves occur during dreaming sleep (REM sleep) and are accompanied by high levels of access to the quantum field.
- **Delta state (0.1 –3.9 Hz):** These waves are very slow, occur during dreamless sleep, and are conducive to the release of human growth hormone. Trained monks can access this level of the field in an awakened state.

Right now as you're reading and learning, you're probably in a beta state. We spend most of our time in this active state rather than thinking and allowing things to happen. However, to be more receptive to the answers, information, people, products, and services we need to achieve our goals, we need to be in the alpha state. And how do we make that happen? Through meditation, breathing, and calming down.

We have been taught in our society to do, do, do. Although we are human beings, we don't seem to do much "being." How can we get out of the rat race? How can we get off the treadmill of life filled with stress and mental anguish and start to work in harmonious vibration with everything around us, the way the universe works?

One of the laws of the universe is "least effort, not most effort." If you're finding that you're working too hard and you're too stressed out, it's because you're working against the laws of the universe. The universe looks for the easiest, fastest way to accomplish its goals—and so should you.

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-- Robert G. Allen, author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Nothing Down, Creating Wealth, and Multiple Streams of Income*



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Entrepreneur John Assaraf started with nothing and went on to create a multimillion-dollar empire and achieve the life of his dreams, earning himself the nickname "The Street Kid."

Now he shares the best of what he's learned so you, too, can create the life of your dreams.

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JOHN ASSARAF is one of the experts featured in the film and book *The Secret*, which he helped launch into a worldwide phenomenon. He has shared his expertise on achieving financial freedom and living an extraordinary life with millions of viewers on Larry King Live, The Ellen DeGeneres Show, and dozens of other media venues worldwide. Visit John at his blog – <http://www.JohnAssaraf.com/blog>

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