

WELCOME

LIMBIC



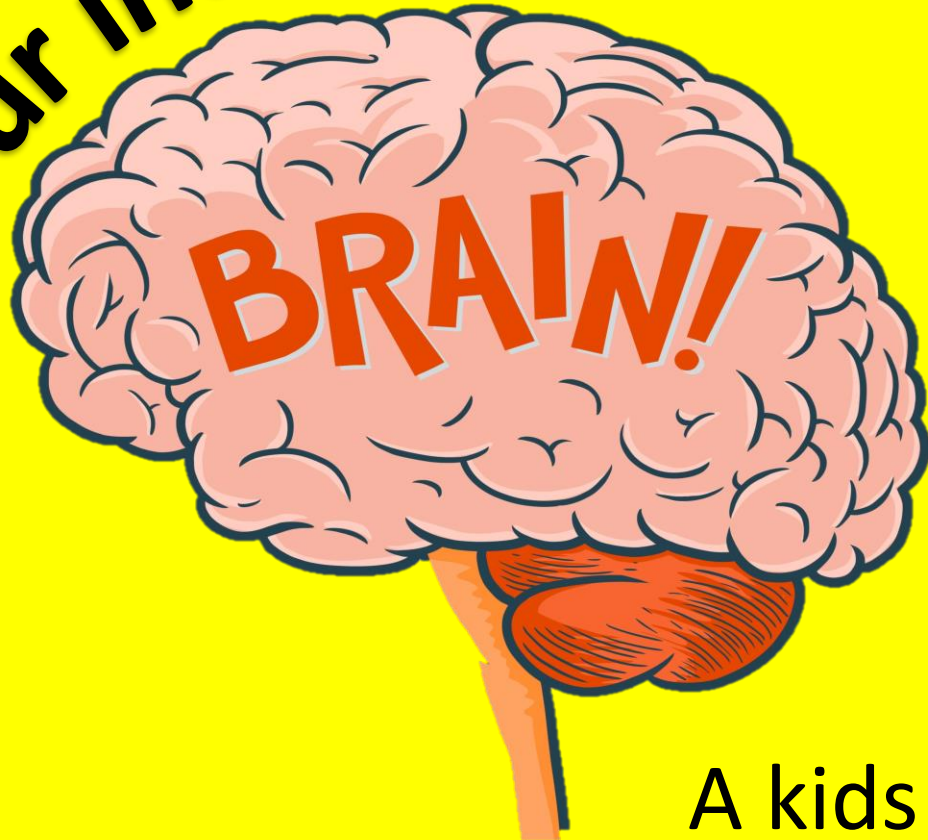
HARLEY



FEAR

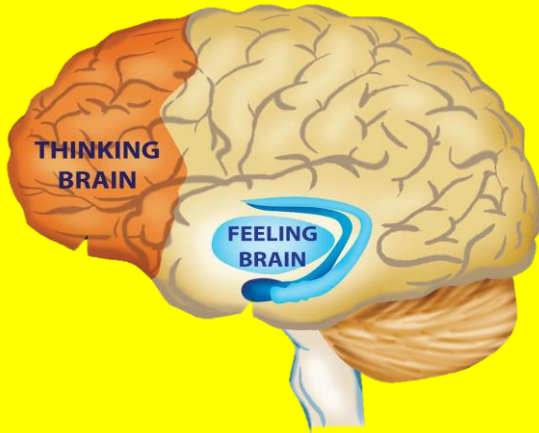


Your incredible



A kids guide

YOUR BRAIN IS COOL- FACT!



There are lots of amazing parts to your brain but the bits which we are going to focus on are:-

- THE FEELING PART** - Limbic System- where we feel fear, anger and sadness
- THE THINKING PART** - pre-frontal cortex- where we imagine and solve problems.

We will learn that how you think effects how you feel and how you feel effects how you behave.

So changing just one of these can rewire your brain and do a lot to help you change things.

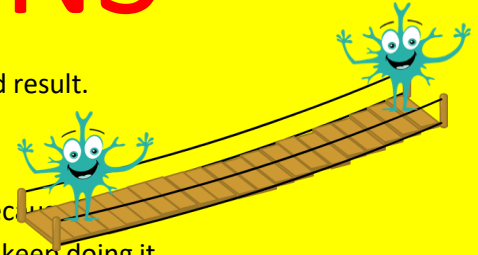
We will learn how you can be the BOSS of your own brain and retrain it to do what you want it to do.

HOW OUR BRAINS

We learn by repeating actions and this builds a bridge in our brains between action and result. The more times we do it, the stronger the bridge.

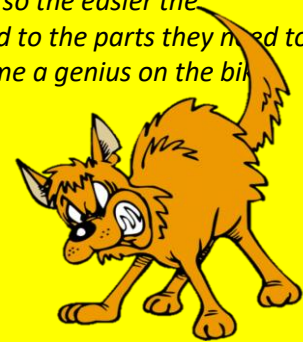
LEARN

When you do something new- like learning your times tables- it may feel really hard because the bridge is just like a rope bridge which is difficult to cross and feels scary, but if you keep doing it, those ropes become stones, then bricks then steel! Before you know it you have built a long lasting bridge that is super strong and you feel really confident crossing it.



Here's an example. When you first learn to ride a bike, you wobble and fall – a lot. That's because the 'riding a bike' bridges in your brain aren't very strong yet. The more you ride, the stronger the pathways get, so the easier the 'this is how you ride a bike' messages travel around to the parts they need to travel to. Over time, the bridges get stronger and you become a genius on the bike.

This can also happen in ways that aren't so good. Like when you might meet a dog and it is not very friendly. A rope bridge is built between neurons to tell your brain that dogs are scary...the more times you see that dog and are scared, the more times that bridge gets stronger until every dog you meet makes you scared.



However, if you meet a friendly dog, and learn to trust them, then another bridge begins to get built that tells your brain this dog is not scary. The more times you meet the friendly dog, the stronger the bridge until you feel that not *all* dogs are scary- just some.

THE FEELING BRAIN

YOUR FEELING BRAIN IS NOT THAT SMART- this is the part of our brains that cave men and women had. All animals have a similar part of their brain.



This is where your friendly inner guard dog comes in- he lives in your feeling brain. and he is charge of keeping you safe from harm. His only job is to keep you alive

...he doesn't care if you are happy or sad, just from things which might put us in danger. But which things our inner dog senses are dangerous, can be up to us.



REMEMBER it is not the object or situation that we are frightened of it is our perception (feelings, ideas, thoughts) of that situation or object that make us scared of it.

The bridge gets built and our fear of things becomes automatic – like riding a bike- and we can lose control over it.

You and your guard dog are linked- so if you act or feel scared he also learns there is danger- so to protect you your dog makes you feel sad, mad or scared....any of these will make you avoid that situation and the danger.

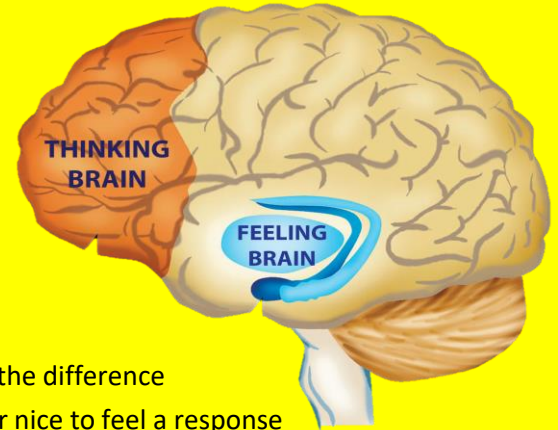
They might do this by being that little voice in your head telling reminding you of all the negatives - all the bad things that might happen.



THE THINKING BRAIN

Your thinking brain is a new part of the brain that only humans have- no other animals have it- including dogs! So we can use it to outsmart our inner guard dog. has it.

This part helps us with solving problems, making good decisions and allows us to imagine and remember things.



Now I am going to tell you something **magical** about your brain. It doesn't know the difference between imagination and reality. You don't have to actually encounter something scary or nice to feel a response

The trouble is, your inner guard dog in your feeling brain doesn't know the difference either, so this means when you imagine or remember things that are bad- your inner dog will react as if you are in danger and try and protect you.

Imagine you have a scary test even just thinking about having to take a test you are worried about means your inner guard dog is barking and sending out the message that there is danger and you need to escape and avoid the test.

However, you have to take the test so he isn't being helpful. Remember- your inner dog is just doing his job- if he is doing it wrong- he needs you to tell him what is ok and what isn't!



WE NEED BOTH BRAINS



Lets imagine a zebra is minding its own business, drinking from a waterhole, when along comes a lion.

The zebra will get very scared and run away fast to stay safe.

Once the zebra is safe- it will shake off the stress and carry on eating and drinking and going about its business of being a zebra.

That Zebra won't think about that lion over and over again, imagining what could have happened if it hadn't gotten away or what might happen to it next time. Zebras live in the here and now. Once the danger is gone, they carry on care free- until next time.



You see our inner guard dog would be reminding us of what could have happened or might happen if we encounter the lion again in order to keep us away from it and safe. So we are less likely to get eaten by a lion than a zebra but we are also likely to live life in constant fear of lions.

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DOG

So we need to train our inner guard dog, just like we train any dog. First of all we need to keep our dog calm. You can't train a dog that is angry and barking or scared and shaking.

We do this by PAWS.. This stands for:

Pay attention to your inner dog- what are they making you feel

Ask yourself do you want to feel that way?

Walk away - from whatever your dog is barking about- a person, a place.

Slow down your breathing- if you focus on breathing your body will relax

Calm thoughts ('Breathe in ... Breath out ...') lead to calm behaviour.

Anxious thoughts ('what if something bad happens?') lead to anxious behaviour.

Remember, thoughts, feelings and behaviours don't need to match. You can feel anxious and think brave, or feel anxious and do brave.



HAPPY DOG - HEALTHY

It is important we keep him trained.

If you want a dog to sit you give it a treat and it will repeat the behaviour because it likes the treats. Your inner guard dog is no different. Only instead of dog biscuits we use the 3 P's.

MIND

Positive Action Doing something you enjoy for yourself or for others. Having hobbies or interests that make us feel good releases happy chemicals in our brains.

Positive Interaction Talking to or doing things with people/animals we like. People feel safer, stronger and wiser in groups because it's how we look after each other and share information. So try to spend time with those who feel good to be around

Positive Thoughts Thinking nice thoughts about ourselves and others. This can be really hard, especially when we feel sad. However, remember the power of our brains- they don't know the difference between real and imagined- so the more we think positive things and imagine them, the happier our brains will be.

