



Women of the JPO

Mindfulness for Well-being and Productivity

Session 2 – The Science of Mindfulness

“[We] are the architects of our own experience.” – Neuroscientist, Lisa Feldman-Barrett

Welcome back to our workshop series on Mindfulness for Well-being and Productivity! Below you will find the agenda for our second session on Friday, December 16, from 0900-1200, and topics of future sessions. Each agenda item is accompanied by a question that we will address through conversation and individual and group activities.

In this session, we will be exploring what science can teach us about our brains, minds, and bodies to better understand the phenomenon of mindfulness and reap the rewards of developing greater conscious awareness. If you'd like to do a bit of pre-reading, check out [this short article](#) by neuroscientist Lisa Feldman-Barrett about how we create our experience.

Agenda

0900 – 0945

Welcome and introductions:

- Returning members: Since our first session, how has your thinking and behavior changed? What have you tried and how did it work?
- New members: What interests/excites you about the topic of mindfulness? What outcome(s) would you like to take away from this session and the program as a whole?

0945 – 1030

How science and research support mindfulness: What can research about the brain, mind, and body tell us about how mindfulness works and how it can help us?

1030 – 1045

BREAK

1045 – 1140

Framing and reframing our experience: How might we use what we've learned so far to direct our practice and create more well-being and productivity?

1140 – 1200

Check-out and next steps: Please share one word that describes what is present for you right now.

Upcoming Sessions

Session 3

Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness: How might we use the practice of mindfulness to become more intelligent and resilient emotionally, in service to ourselves and others?

Session 4:

Bringing Mindfulness to Our Teams, Families, and Communities: What practical things can we do to help build a culture and practice of mindfulness wherever we go?

Goals we've identified:

- To be calmer
- To quiet our thoughts and have less "noise" inside our heads
- To ruminate or obsess less about things
- To lower stress
- To be more productive with our time
- To improve our overall experience of life

Outcomes we'd like to create:

- To be healthier
- To have happier, more productive relationships
- To be more in control of our lives and our experience

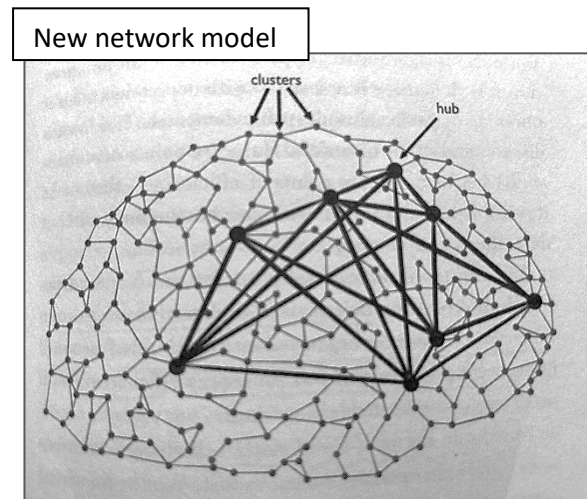
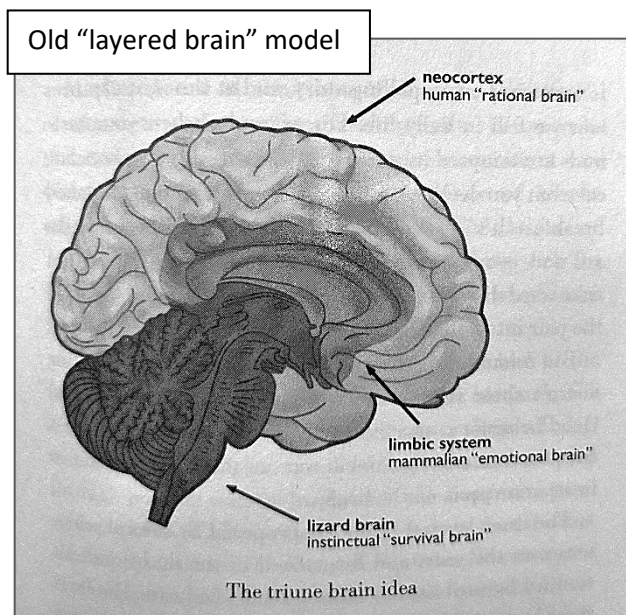
IDEAS TO GUIDE OUR CONVERSATION TODAY

Old and new ways to understand the brain (from *7 ½ Lessons About the Brain*, p.15, 35):

There is a prevalent story that your brain evolved in layers beginning with the most primitive "lizard brain", followed by the mammalian "emotional brain", and ending with your "rational brain" or neocortex.

Now considered a myth, this model of the brain goes back at least to Plato and was entered into the modern scientific literature in the 1960's by a physician named Paul MacLean.

We now understand the brain to be a complex network of neurons connected by hubs, much like the international air traffic system.



Most functions, including bodily regulation and emotions happen as the result of activity across the entire brain, which is constantly in communication with the rest of the body. Many of our 100 billion neurons can serve multiple functions, making for a flexible, adaptable network designed to keep your complex body alive and well and able to pass on your genes.

Things to know about the brain:

1. Your brain is not for thinking.
2. You are born with your brain “under construction”. It is “wired” by your world, including the people around you and your experiences (inner and outer).
3. Your brain predicts (almost) everything you do.
4. Your brain works with many other brains to create reality.
5. You have more power than you may think to “rewire” your brain and change your experience.

ACTIVITIES

Guided Meditation

You can download a copy of this meditation from the resource web page for this workshop (link in Teams).

Rethink. Rewire. Renew.

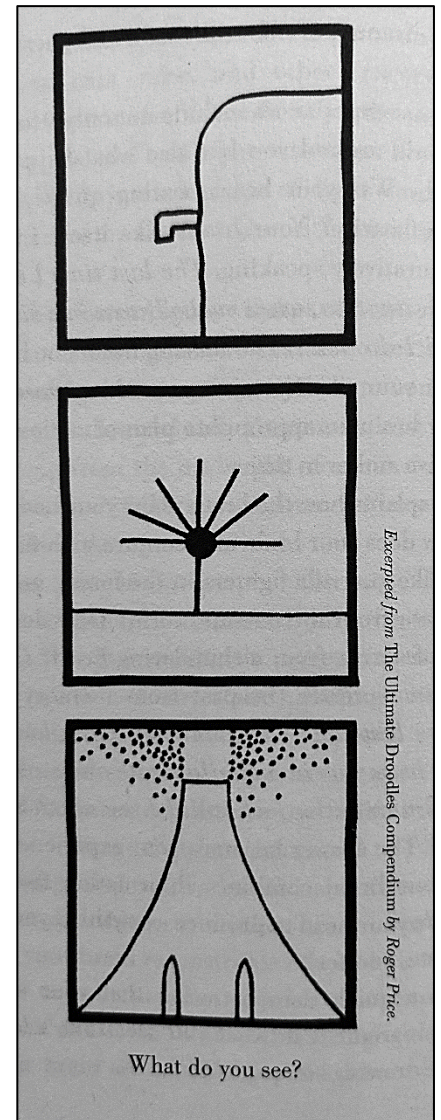
The objectives of this activity are to bring mindful attention to balancing your body budget and to make a plan to reduce stress and boost well-being.

Instructions:

Consider the questions below and write down your responses. For each item, also write down one baby step you’ll commit to, beginning now, that will bring you closer to budgeting well.

When everyone is finished, we will pair up to share our experience and offer encouragement and support.

1. Sleep: On average, how much sleep do you get each night? How would you rate the quality of your sleep? Do you sleep soundly? Is it interrupted?
2. Exercise: How much exercise do you get in an average week? What forms of exercise do you particularly enjoy? What would you like to try?
3. Nourishment: What is the quality of the food you eat? How much highly processed food do you consume? How much sugar? How much soda?
4. Overall health: How are you attending to health issues? What needs attention and from whom?
5. Relationships: Overall, how would you rate the quality of your relationships in the various aspects of your life, e.g., family, friends, colleagues, community? Which ones bring you most joy? Where do you feel most connected and supported? Which ones need work? What relationship challenge(s), if resolved right now, would lead to a sizeable reduction in stress?
6. Time for you: When and how do you attend to your own needs, e.g., taking time for contemplation, spending time with people you care about, learning something new, engaging in things you love to do (other than work)?



7 ½ Lessons About the Brain, p. 68