

INTRODUCTION - NEW SECTION 4
WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO LEARN
ABOUT YOUR MIND'S FUNCTIONS?
November 12, 2017

This website is designed to help parents develop a balanced approach to making sure that their children learn healthy brain habits. The bonus is that what is good for children's brains is also good for children's hearts!

Children need to exercise regularly, eat nutritious foods, get enough sleep, and challenge their brains on a daily basis to solve difficult problems by using modern critical thinking skills and critical reading strategies.

This website teaches thinking skills that provide a modern humanistic philosophy of life. You can use this website to provide reliable brain knowledge for dealing with family life relationship issues. It includes brain information related to good parenting practices.

To be a humanist parent is to be able to use your intellectual intelligence (IQ) and your emotional intelligence (EQ) to reason effectively for the purpose of creating a fulfilling philosophy of life for yourself and for your children based upon modern principles of critical thinking and critical reading within the context of a secular view of history.

As a humanist parent, or someone responsible for teaching children, you need to create balance and challenge in your own life, so you and the children under your guidance can create more cognitive reserve (more resilience) and less cognitive dissonance (less confusion). This goal can prepare you for emergencies and also provide the basis for fulfilling family interactions.

The idea of increasing cognitive reserve means that you can increase the variety and the density of the neuronal connections throughout your brain and nervous system by doing a variety of interesting and challenging new activities on a daily basis.

Children must be trained to satisfy their own age-related developmental needs of physical, intellectual, and emotional growth through the predictable developmental stages and teachable moments of their young lives.

The idea of reducing cognitive dissonance in your own life, and in the lives of your children, refers to conscientiously coping with the mind-numbing assault on the brains of children by the ubiquitous disruptive mass media and the addictive social media with their omnipresent advertisements and commercials.

These attention demanding commercials compete with educational programs for the precious TIME that children would have to get actively engaged in educational pursuits.

Kids could be more enthusiastic about gaining an understanding of science, history, politics, art, and even their own health if they were not constantly pressured to waste so much time on noisy commercials.

Unfortunately, when children's brains are distracted so much of the time, childish traditional metaphorical beliefs can be reinforced. Such irrational beliefs can become simplistic habits in spite of the fact that children need to be developing an appreciation for the complexity of reality as they grow up.

The fundamental Humanist Parenting Principle is that parents need to give their children the boost they need to keep their brains, minds, and bodies healthy for a lifetime of challenges and changes.

To achieve this important humanistic family objective, the new brain ideas need to be discussed within the family context at all ages. All family members can participate and contribute within the context of mindful growth through the sequence of predictable "ages and stages" concerning childhood growth factors.

As both you and your children learn the new brain ideas in a rational humanistic context, the new scientific insights about brain structures and mind functions can become more useful in everyday decision-making and problem-solving situations.

The new brain knowledge can help children learn to control their thoughts and feelings better by using the most important brain ideas ever discovered. Parents and teachers can teach children progressive mindfulness skills so their behavior and aspirations for the future will reflect the modern humanistic liberal values of respect for diversity, including gender, racial and ethnic inclusion.

The book, 10 MINDFUL MINUTES, by Goldie Hawn and Wendy

Holden, describes a wonderful way to introduce children at home or in the classroom to a sensible brain vocabulary and many skill-sets. They can empower children to enjoy more meaningful lives by teaching kids self-development skills and vocabularies that help them understand the deep humanistic history of humanity.

The book publication data is shown in the following information box:

10 MINDFUL MINUTES:

giving our children (and ourselves) the social and emotional skills to reduce stress and anxiety for healthier, happy lives by Goldie Hawn and Wendy Holden. A Perigee BookPenguin Group, 2011 (218 pages)

The book suggests that parents and teachers can teach children to think of the two parts of their prefrontal cortex as if they were "Two Wise Owls" since they are the primary source of their conscious self-awareness. The two prefrontal cortices are located above each eye about an inch below the forehead. They are about the size of a penny in the front section of both the left and right cerebral hemispheres.

The two wise owls, as shown in the following diagram, enable children (and adults) to make choices and be kind to each other once they are permanently stored in their long-term memories:

A CHILD'S PREFRONTAL CORTICES
CAN BE THOUGHT OF AS BEING LIKE
TWO WISE OWLS

THE TWO WISE OWLS ARE LOCATED
AT THE FRONT OF THE BRAIN ON
EACH HEMISPHERE

The other essential part of the human brain that can be taught to children at home or in the classroom is the function of the amygdala. This vital brain function can help children regulate their emotions when they learn that their amygdala is like a "Guard Dog."

The amygdala gland is divided, just like the prefrontal cortex, and the two parts are located in the front of the limbic system underneath both cerebral hemispheres.

Children can use the idea of having an amygdala gland to control angry feelings and also to express happy loving feelings when appropriate. See the guard dog in the following diagram:

A CHILD'S AMYGDALA CAN BE
THOUGHT OF AS BEING LIKE
A GUARD DOG

THE TWO AMYGDALA GLANDS ARE
LOCATED AT THE FRONT OF BOTH
HEMISPHERES IN THE LIMBIC SYSTEM

In this regard, teachers and therapists have been alarmed by the huge amount of screen time that most children devote to their hand-held devices (smartphones and tablets) instead of having face-to-face conversations with their parents, peers, and teachers.

However, learning to be aware of the extreme importance of face-to-face contacts with other human beings within the family or classroom context is the best way for children to learn how to interpret and express proper healthy emotional responses to the common human experiences of growing up.

The Humanist Solution is for parents to take advantage of the remarkable ability of their adult brains and, especially, the brains of their children, to adapt to almost anything. This phenomenon is known by many brain scientists as the neuroplasticity of the connectome. In other words, your conscious self-awareness or SELF requires a connected brain and body!

This "whole brain" mental process refers to the changes in the synapses, which connect neurons to each other inside the neuronal pathways of your body's connectome. This remarkable mental capacity can be guided by previously learned habits or by conscious choices that are just as real as tables and chairs or cars and trees.

In addition to the brain process of neuroplasticity, brains can change by neurogenesis. It is the growth of new neurons in your limbic system's olfactory glands, which is the part of your brain

required to detect odors, and in your limbic system's hippocampus, which is the part of your brain that contains the "triggers" of your long-term memory system.

As children learn how to name and understand the parts of their brains, which cause particular functions, it is important that they learn the basis of their own self-awareness and self-identity.

Awareness of one's self-identity depends upon the special interactive functions of the prefrontal cortex (intentional executive function) and the long-term memory system, which contains the episodic, semantic, and procedural (muscle memory) declarative memory functions.

This website makes clear that any confusion about this fundamental presupposition that your SELF or conscious self-awareness is a true fact and not an illusion is due to incorrect misguided traditional ways of thinking about human nature and the purpose of the human brain.

It is important to know this scientific fact (basic truth) since there have been many false ideas built into the structure of the English Language during the past few hundreds of years.

The new scientific insights about true brain structures and true mental functions need to replace the old obsolete ideas about the so-called spiritual or mystic nature of human brains. Most humans have wrong ideas about the value of their brains!

It is now known that the human brain makes your enlightened consciousness possible. And when properly taught with a humanistic education, meaning a knowledge of science and secular history, children can grow up to be responsible adults with an expanded self-awareness and socially responsible values.

It is time to replace the spiritual and mystic ideas about the soul with scientific humanistic ideas about the SELF in the developing vocabularies of children of all ages.

Furthermore, based upon the most recent scientific evidence, this website explains how the dynamic enlightened consciousness is produced by the fine-tuned self-organized memories and the phenomenon of human neuroplasticity.

A person or SELF is what it chooses to be by controlling the mind's ability to reason as thoughts, feelings, and memories are experienced because of the brain's neuroplasticity process.

The interactive neuronal connections between the brain's dozens of organs and the tens of thousands of words in the English language are what give a child the ability to think and feel and predict the most probable outcomes that the child's reasoning ability can conceive and achieve.

It is helpful to start by simplifying the explanation of the most complex three pounds of matter in the cosmos, which is a child's brain.

After you have helped your child memorize the 15 brain ideas and learn to organize his or her long-term memory system in specific categories of subjects that you think are appropriate, your child will be able to change his or her mind any time it is necessary.

The educational philosophy behind this new approach to explaining the importance of understanding the brain's structures and the mind's functions is called whole brain thinking.

By helping your children avoid useless social behaviors and dangerous addictive habits whenever possible, you will be able to optimize the functions of the brains of your child by simply teaching him or her to relax more and to stay focused on agreed upon goals and plans in spite of the overwhelming cultural distractions that families face today.

Now it is possible to teach your children the new brain vocabulary so they will learn about the essential brain functions required for healthy intellectual and emotional growth. To be effective, you must discuss the desired behaviors continuously and model them always in your daily activities with your children.

When you teach your children to appreciate the new brain vocabulary, you will be demonstrating for them that you believe they can become brain savvy. You will be showing them that they can organize their time with the goal of making altruistic ethical decisions as they grow into adulthood.

Checklists can empower children to keep track of their activities and responsibilities in the context of a weekly family meeting to

discuss the achievements and plans and expectations of everyone. Then kids can learn how to manage their free time better by doing more effective studying and playing. And they can learn how to imagine the consequences of their decisions.

This frame of reference can give you a reliable way to evaluate the results of your parenting practices. For example, you can teach children not to be distracted by mass media advertisements and online shopping choices, which their young brains are exposed to every day on television or the radio or podcasts or computers or in movies, or on social media, including music and games.

Today, when children's success in life depends more than ever before on independent thinking skills and emotionally intelligent reasoning skills, it is vitally important to teach them how to determine the rational benefits and the possible risks of their decisions. It is the function of a humanist parent to teach children how to make sane and fair choices based upon reasoning rather than blind obedience.

Unfortunately, our hyper-connected consumption-driven society can itself be a source of brain damage due to the constant disruptive influences by the ubiquitous mass media. Since corporations want to commodify your experience of being a human being by selling you anything and everything, it is important that humanist parents teach their children how to cope with the overwhelming media distractions.

This mindless triggering of unnecessary false emotions by the incessant marketing of the mass media and the social media both require that specific critical thinking skills and critical reading strategies and progressive mindfulness skills be taught to children so they will be resilient and know how to deal with the enormous distress caused by hyper-commercialism.

As both you and your children learn the new brain ideas in a rational humanistic context, the new scientific insights about brain structures and mind functions can become more useful in everyday decision-making and problem-solving situations.

In addition to the brain process of neuroplasticity, brains can change by neurogenesis. It is the growth of new neurons in your limbic system's two olfactory glands, which is the part of your brain required to detect odors, and in your limbic system's

hippocampus, which is the part of your brain that contains the "triggers" of your long-term memory system.

Finally, to summarize: it is possible to teach your children the new brain vocabulary so they will learn about the essential brain functions required for healthy intellectual and emotional growth. To be effective, you must discuss the desired behaviors continuously and model them always in your daily activities with your children.

WHY THIS MATTERS: This website can help humanist parents teach their children the new whole-brain thinking approach to the scientific understanding of brain structures and mental functions, which is the best way to integrate the new brain knowledge into humanist family living in order to produce responsible and resilient family members.