



Train your brain

Bởi:

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“[W]e are seeing evidence of the brain’s ability to remake itself throughout adult life, not only in response to outside stimuli, but even in response to directed mental effort. We are seeing, in short, the brain’s potential to correct its own flaws and enhance its own capabilities.”

Jeffrey M. Schwartz, M.D. and Sharon Begley: *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*

As we have already seen, when your world turns upside down your brain tends to go haywire. The ancient fight or flight reflex causes you to pick fights you don’t need to fight, or run away from problems you *do* need to face. Anxiety leads you to panic or paralysis. A distorted perception of reality makes things seem much worse than they really are, and closes the door on a great future. And the voices of negative self-talk are no longer just talking, they are shouting.

At this point it is essential for you to recognize what’s happening and redirect your cognitive and emotional processes. In their recent book *You are Not Your Brain* Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Rebecca Gladding describe a four-step process for doing this:

Re-Label: Identify deceptive and self-abusive brain messages and how they are reflected in negative and painful emotions such as anxiety and behaviors such as avoidance.

Re-Frame: Give negative thoughts and emotions (such as catastrophizing, all-or-nothing thinking, discounting the positive, etc.) a new and different interpretation.

Re-Focus: Find ways to shift your attention from negative thoughts and emotions to something more positive; this can be something as simple as taking a walk, smiling, paying attention to your breathing, or writing out a gratitude list.

Re-Value: Learn to see life from the perspective of what the authors call “a loving and compassionate Wise Advocate” who always has your best interest at heart. The authors, who are both pioneers in our understanding of brain plasticity, conclude that “with time, you will rewire your brain in such a way that those new activities become a regular, routine part of your life, and those unhealthy habits will increasingly become a thing of the past.”