



The King's (The Cathedral) School
Peterborough

Mindfulness 5

Rewiring Your Brain

Not only does behaviour change the structure of the brain through neuroplasticity just thinking about or imagining particular behaviours can change brain structure as well.

John B. Arden

- **If you're in the habit of thinking negatively, it helps to understand what's going on in your brain.**
- **The core components of the brain are neurons. Neurons are cells that process and transmit information and they're connected to each other by neural pathways and networks.**
- **When you think or do something new, a new neural pathway is created. Then, each time you think or do something in that particular way, your brain uses that same neural pathway. The pathway becomes stronger and stronger each time it's used.**

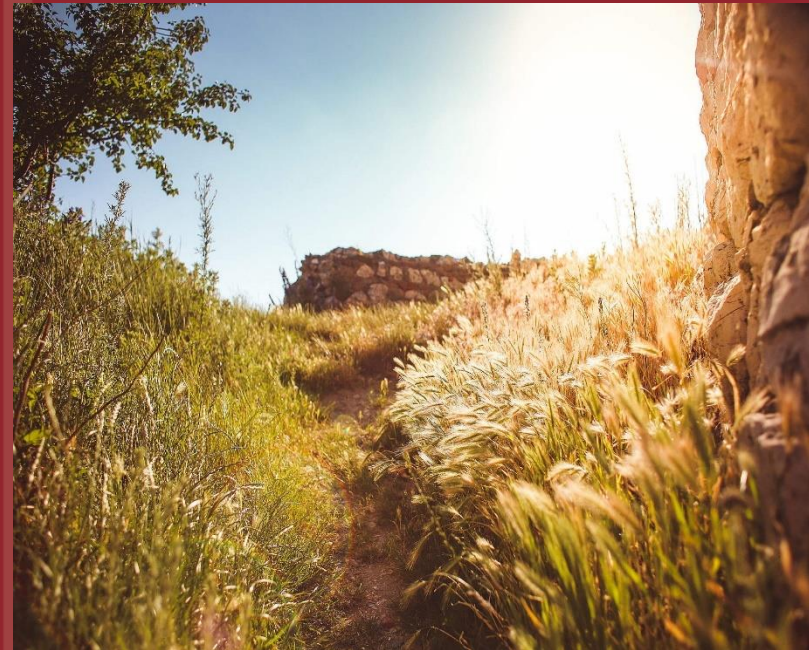
- It's just like walking through a field of long grass - the more often that path is trodden, the more established the path becomes and the more likely it is that you'll take that path.



- This is of great benefit to you because it means that if you do something often enough, it becomes automatic, a habit; you don't have to think about it. Think, for example, of the things you do on a daily basis that your brain and body are so used to, they don't have to think about them - walking, talking, eating, brushing your teeth, driving, texting, etc.



- However, this same process of neural pathways developing automatic ways of thinking and doing also establishes habits that are not so good for you: smoking, overeating, drinking, negative thinking and so on.
- If you often interpret events in a negative way, then you create strong negative neural pathways in your brain.
- Those neural pathways become so established that they also become habits: negative thinking habits.





- The good news is that if you change how you think or what you do - if you think and behave in more positive ways - then new neural pathways are formed.
- When you continue using these new pathways, they become stronger. Eventually, they will replace the old ways of thinking and behaving.
- You will have rewired - or reprogrammed - your brain.



If you change the way you look at things, you change the way you look at change.

Wayne Dyer

In Practice (1)



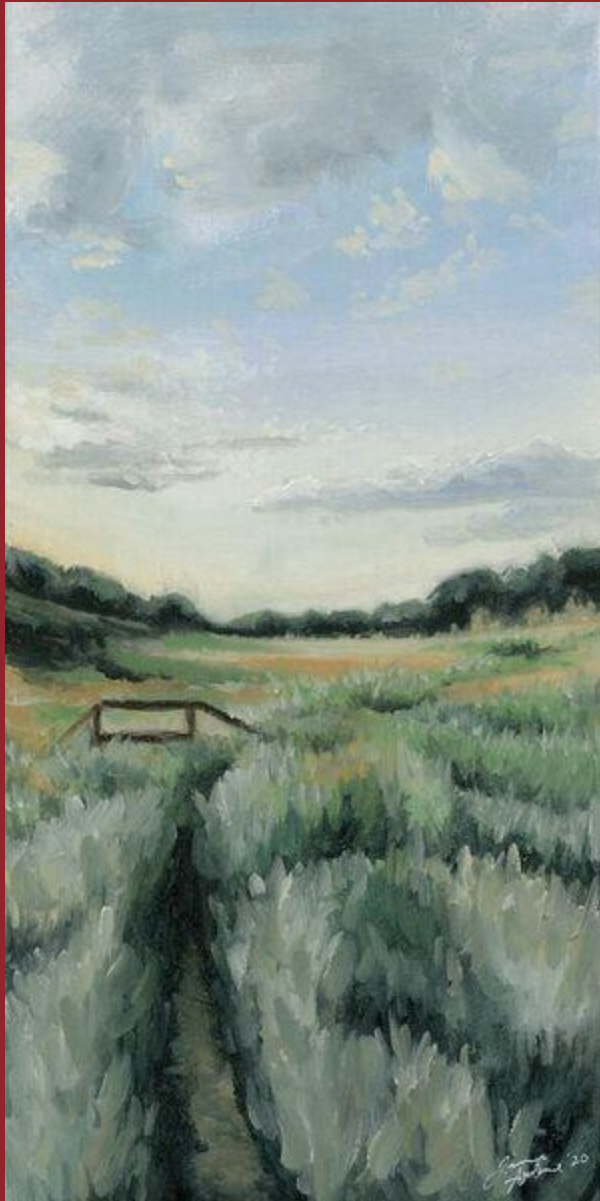
Rewire your brain. Try doing things differently and see how it's possible to retrain your brain...

- **Get a piece of paper and if you're right-handed, use your left hand (your non-dominant hand) instead of your right hand; if you're left-handed, use your right hand.**

Do the following:

- **Draw a square**
- **Draw a circle**
- **Draw a triangle**
- **Write the numbers 1 to 10**
- **Write your name**
- **Write the following sentence: 'I'm writing this sentence with my non-dominant hand'**

In Practice (2)



Now use your non-dominant hand to do one of the following every day for a week:

- Brush your teeth
- Make your tea or coffee
- Open doors

It will take time and effort because the neural pathway for using your right (or left) hand is well established

But if you really want to do it, you can forge new neural pathways and develop the ability to do things with a different hand

You can retrain your brain

In Practice (3)



- It's the same process for establishing positive ways of thinking - it takes time, effort and commitment to think in more positive ways, but it is possible and it's never too late.
- In fact, the more of the tips, strategies and ideas for positive thinking you use, the more often you use them, the quicker and more easily you will be a positive thinker!