

## Experiential Learning for Deep Change in Schools and Youth Justice Settings

Scott Larson, DMin, Founder and President of Straight Ahead Ministries, Worcester, Massachusetts Whole-brain teaching uses experiential learning approaches that engage youth in learning. This enhances any cognitive teaching or treatment curriculum.



**Straight Ahead**  
**MINISTRIES**

OFFERING KIDS A WAY OUT

# *Programming our Relational Joy Circuits*

Scott Larson

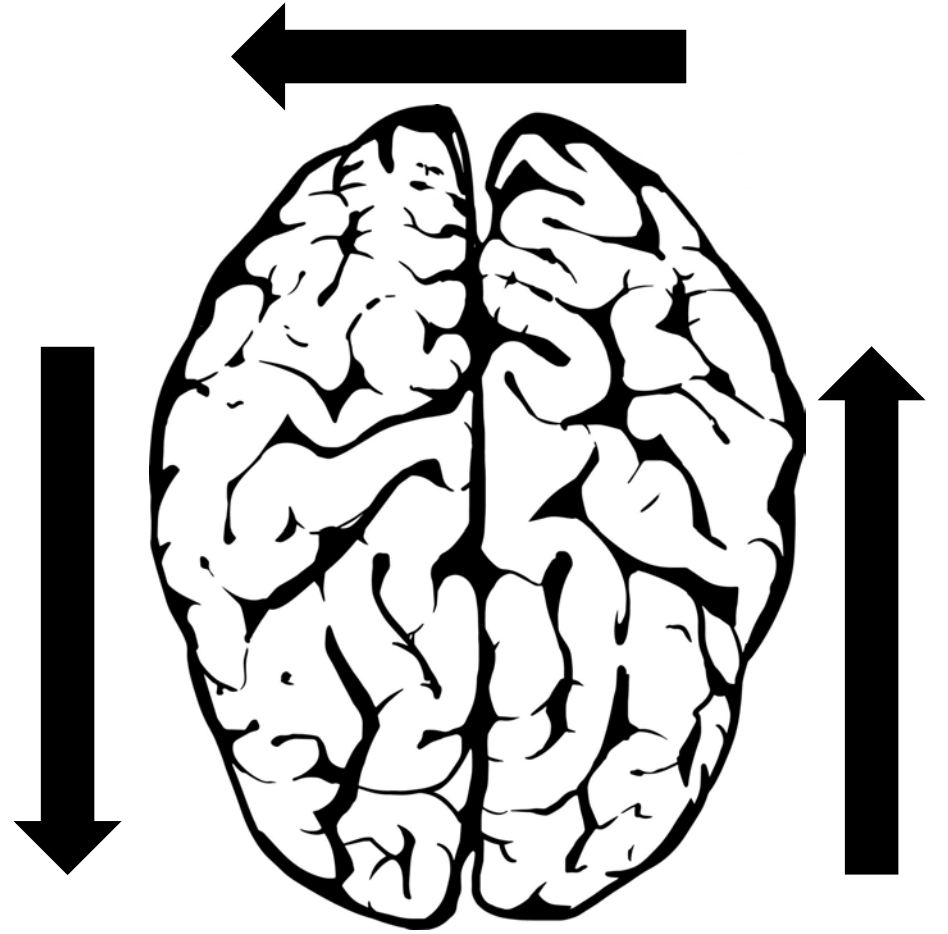
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Another way to Divide the Brain



# Shattering Common Myths:

- The right side is creative and the left side is analytical.
- Some people, by design, are left brain dominant while others are right brain dominant.

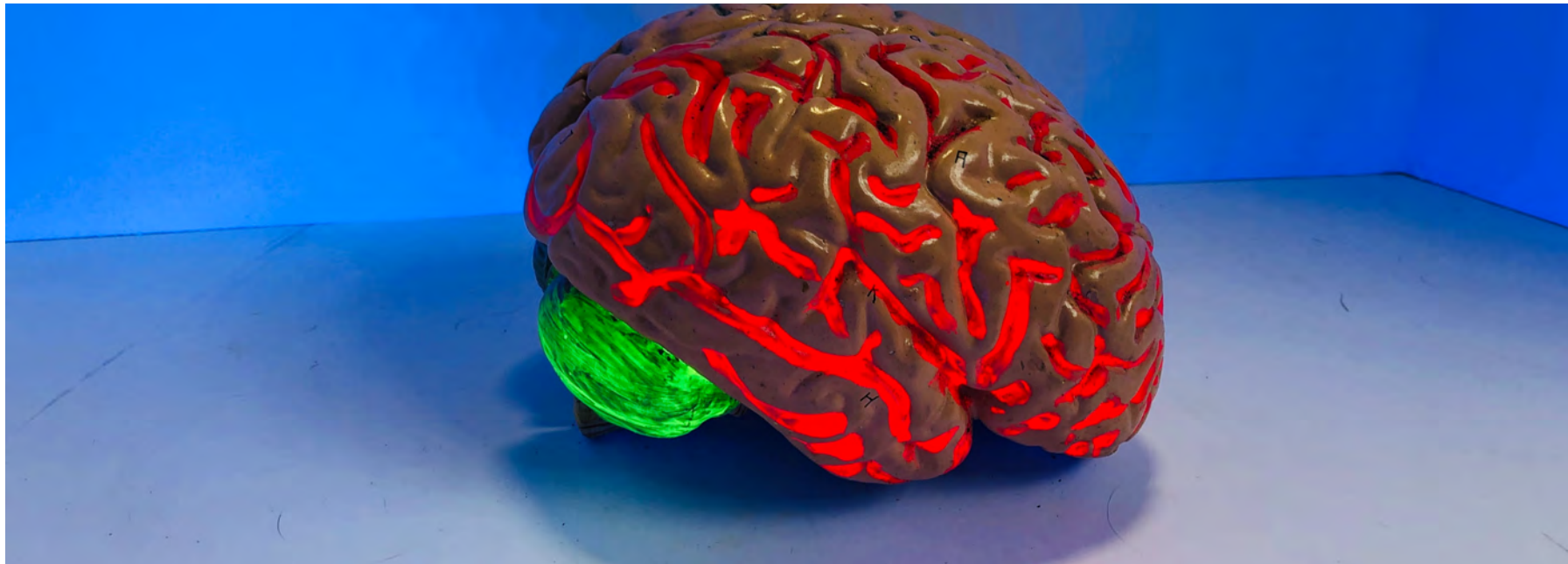


Artists and musicians are right brained, and accountants and engineers are left brained? Not!

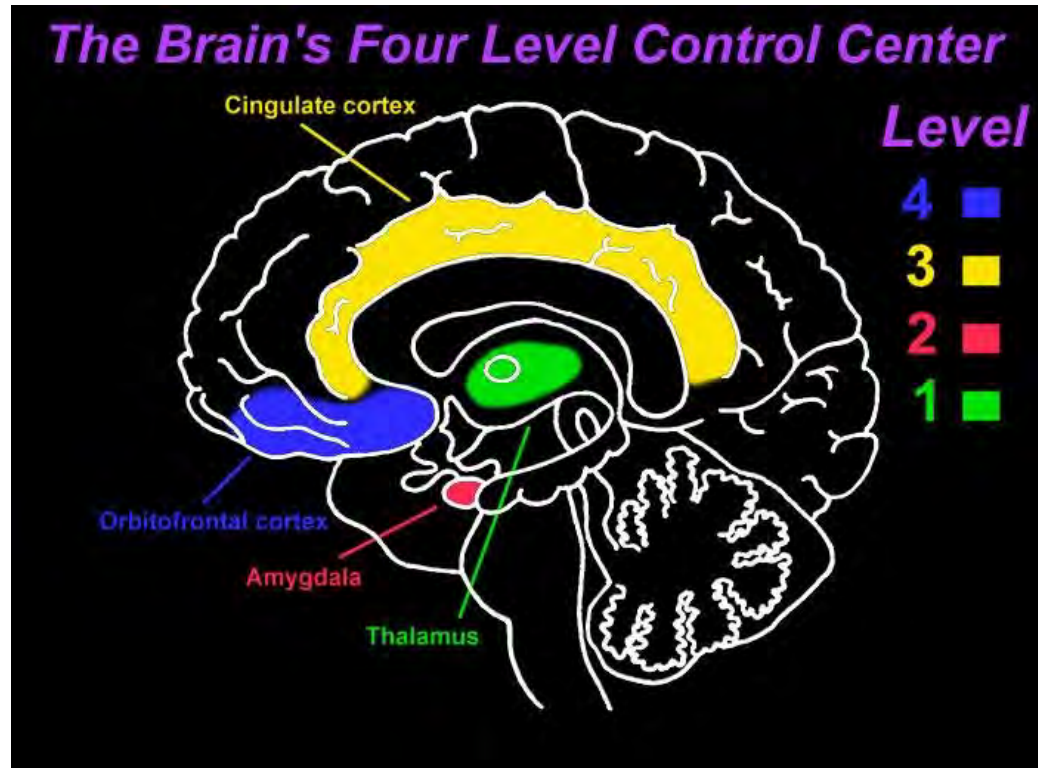




Our brain brings together our current experience, our group identity, and emotionally important personal memories (stories) to create an active sense of who we are in our relationships at that moment. Much of it faster than we are conscious of.



# The Master Control Center system for the entire brain is embedded in the right hemisphere (the fast track)



- 4. Identity – executive control
- 3. Attunement – relational circuits  
----- conscious line -----
- 2. Assessment – good, bad, scary
- 1. Attachment – survival program

# Hemispheric Functions/Skills

## **Left Hemisphere – Manager – Subordinate**

- Conscious Thought
- Speech
- Strategies
- Problem Solving
- Logic
- Stories

## **Right Hemisphere – Leader – Dominant**

- Individual Identity
- Group Identity
- Emotional Attunement to Others
- Assessment of Surroundings (Good, Bad, Scary)
- Relational Attachments



# 2 Processors and Different Views of “Reality”

## **Left Hemisphere – Manager – Subordinate**

- 5 Cycles/Second
- Rational
- Solves Problems
- Accomplishes Tasks
- Works with Parts
- Wants a Map
- Withdraws into Abstraction
- Narrows Down onto Certainties

## **Right Hemisphere – Leader – Dominant**

- 6 Cycles/Second
- Relational
- Provides Impetus
- Creates Attachments
- Sees the Whole
- Engages the Landscape
- Requires Embodiment
- Opens Up to Possibilities



*The intuitive mind is a sacred gift. And the rational mind is a faithful servant.*

*...We have created a society that honors the servant, but has forgotten the gift.*

Albert Einstein

The right brain manages our strongest relational connections as well as our character formation. If we want to grow and transform our character, we must involve activities that stimulate and develop relational/emotional maturity.





We are transformed more by who loves us and whom we love (attachment) than by information, facts, beliefs, choices and stated commitments.

Whole-brained teaching makes full use of both content and relationships. Contemporary, half-brained education, parks on the content and leaves the relational soil untended.



**Emotional and Relational Intelligence** are essential for effective learning, human maturation and character transformation.



Chris M. Coursey



# THE JOY SWITCH

HOW YOUR BRAIN'S SECRET CIRCUIT  
AFFECTS YOUR RELATIONSHIPS—  
AND HOW YOU CAN ACTIVATE IT

What is Joy? It's easier to see than to describe!



Joy/Hesed is not simply a direct choice, but also a spontaneous response to being authentically glad to be with another. It happens faster than conscious choice or thought. Our eyes involuntarily sparkle!

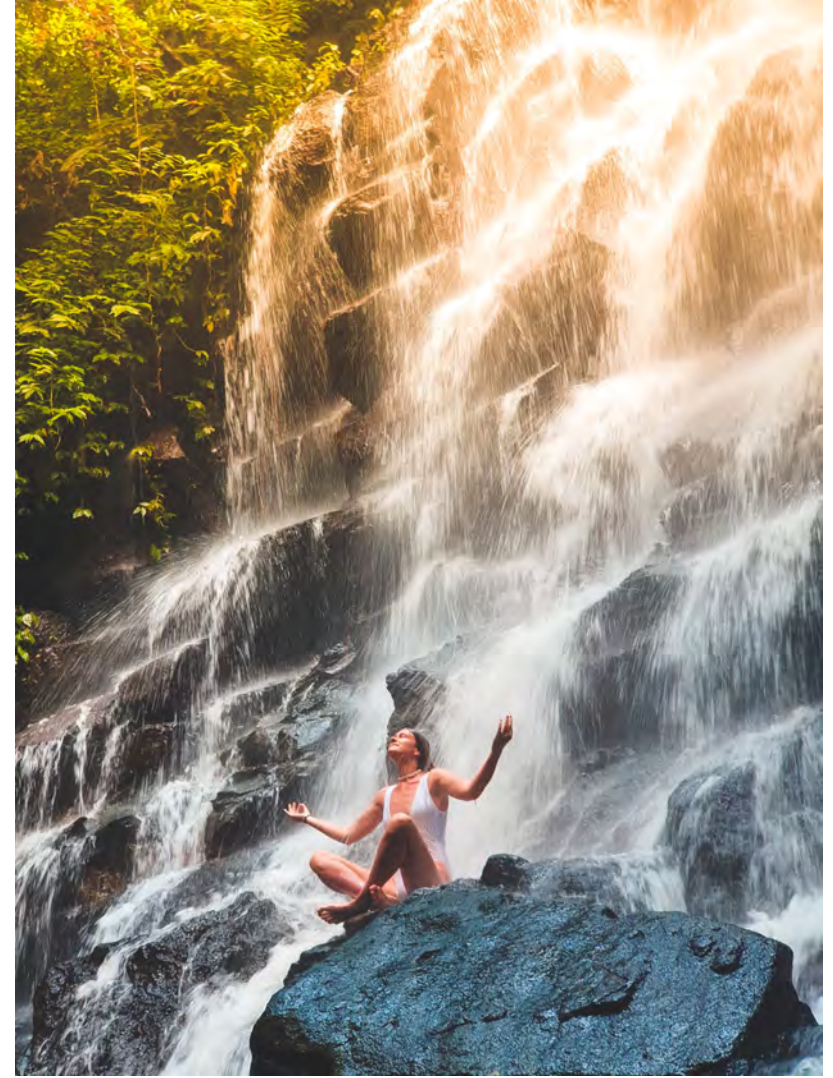




- Hesed/Joy is deeper than an emotion
- Joy is our most powerful yearning
- Joy is not contrary to sacrifice or pain
- Joy is relational – Glad to be with you!
- We can endure hardship well when we know the joy of not being alone.



Joy helps us regulate the big emotions (sad, anger, disgust, shame, fear, despair) and endure sufferings while remaining relational and maintaining our true identity.





Our identity center grows in response to joy which helps us act like ourselves in all situations.





We do well to  
raise the joy level,  
before tackling  
trauma resolution







# Gratitude to Create a New Normal

Abide in gratitude 5 minutes a day, 3 times a day for 30 days – your brain will re-set to a joyful norm! Begin with just 1 time a day!



## Other exercises to calm vagus nerve and activate right hemisphere of the brain:

1. Deep breathing (trauma breathing). ie. Box Breathing (4x4)
2. Rituals of checking in with SASHET (sad, angry, scared, happy, excited, tender) emotions



