

# Growing Older Gracefully

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Brain References  
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7-19

**Although medicine is finding more and more “cures,”  
prevention is usually the better option**

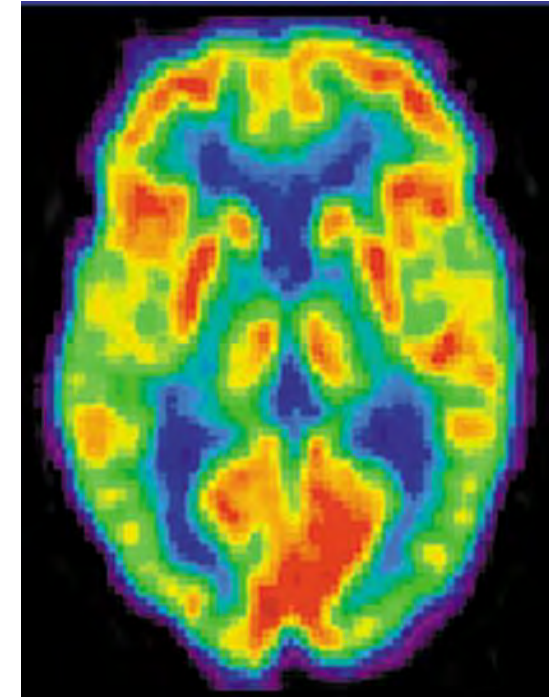
**Remember, estimates are that more than half the factors  
that have been found to impact aging are within your  
partial or complete control -- spend your time, money, and  
energy on those factors**

**Here are five researched strategies that can  
help you grow older gracefully, when applied!**



# Things you can do NOW--and they all start in the brain!

- 1. Increase Your Awareness**
- 2. Choose a Positive Mindset**
- 3. Live the 20:80 Rule**
- 4. Be Intentional**
- 5. Laugh and have fun**



PET Scan -  
normal brain

# 1. Increase your Awareness

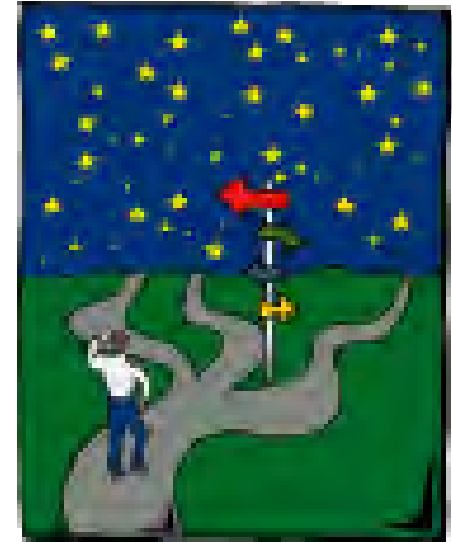


- ✓ You can only know what you pay attention to
- ✓ You are more likely to recall what you pay attention to
- ✓ You can only deal effectively with what you can identify, label, and describe
- ✓ Are you aware of your thoughts? Your facial expression?

**Awareness is the first step on the continuum of positive change**  
—Oliver Wendell Holmes

## Increase your internal self-awareness

- How is your EQ level?
- Are you happy or unhappy?
- Are you angry about anything?
- Are you nervous and fearful or calm?
- Are you sad or depressed?
- Are you energetic or lethargic
- Are well or unwell?
- Are you forgiving or unforgiving?



**Increase your surround awareness--what is going on in your environment**

**? What is the temperature like; the humidity**

**? Are the people positive or negative**

**? What is the emotional atmosphere like**



**? What is your intuition telling you**

**Those who are aware of their surroundings often can avoid problems or exposure to danger**

**How aware are you?**

**Do conventional hard-copy books tend to have the even numbered pages on the right side or on the left?**



**Even numbered pages are on the  
left; odd on the right**



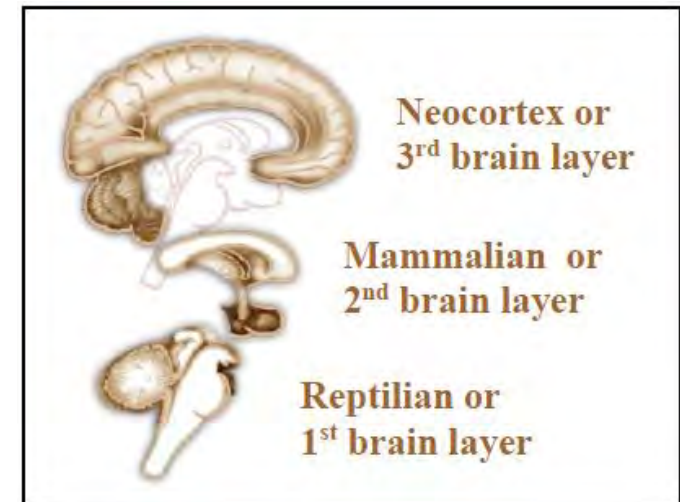


## 2. Choose a positive Mindset

Your brain can only do what it thinks you can do... a positive mindset creates positive internal mental pictures and gives your brain a map to follow

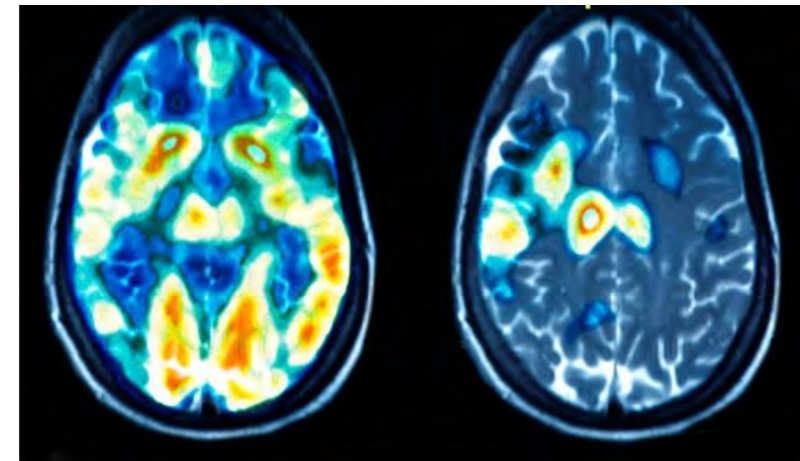
This is an effective way to:

- Program your subconscious
- Improve your health
- Increase your energy
- Help you stay younger longer . . .



**Psychoneuroimmunology or PNI has found that every thought you think alters your neurochemistry and affects every cell in your body, including brain, nervous system, immune system, and endocrine system**

**Avoid whining about what you are no longer able to do (some of which you probably should not have been doing anyway—focus on what you can do to be healthy, productive, happy ...**



**Normal**

**Depressed**

**Think thoughts about all the positive things you want to have happen . . .**



**Tell your brain what you are doing as if the behavior is already in place and occurring**

***“Arlene, you are a supercentenarian with good mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, social and \_\_\_\_\_ function . . .”***

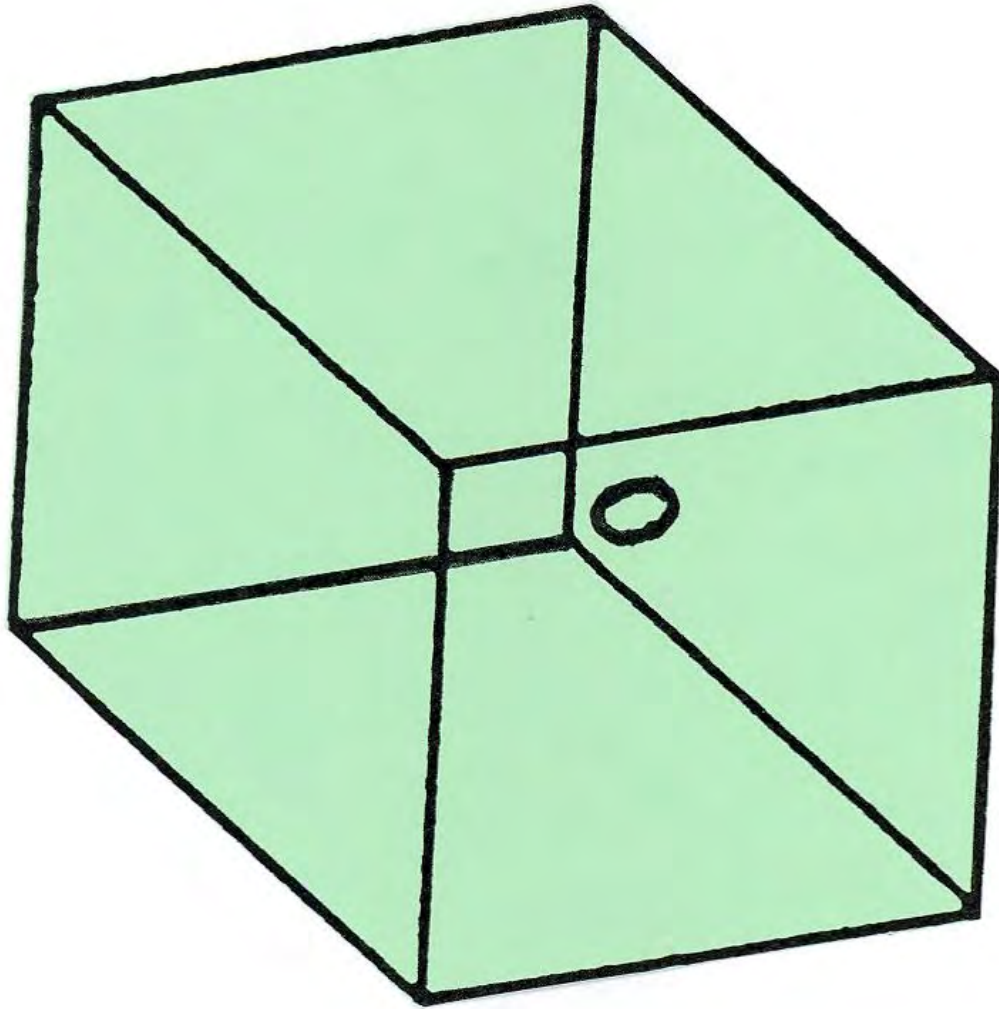


**There is a payoff for maintaining a positive can-do attitude**

**Your habitual attitudes form neural circuits in the brain. If you choose to maintain a specific attitude, the brain can literally rewire itself to facilitate that attitude.**

**—Doc Childre and Howard Martin, *The HeartMath Solution***

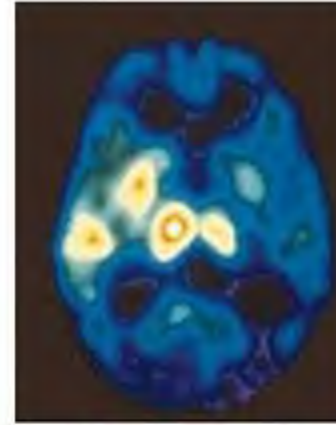
**Embrace the concept of staying young while growing older gracefully and then go with it!**



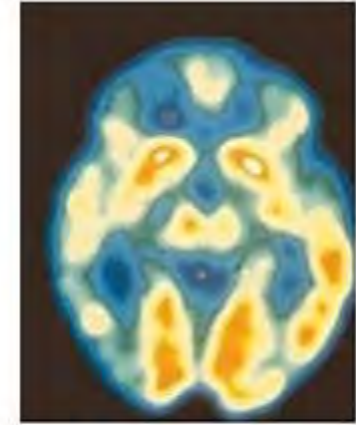
**Where is the  
opening to  
the box?**

### 3. Live the 20:80 Rule

The brain is the first system to recognize a stressor and reacts with nano-second speed to trigger the stress response--that lasts for up to 72 hours hours after a traumatic event—real or imagined—longer, if you keep rehearsing the event with emotion



**Stressed &  
Depressed**



**Optimal  
Functioning**

Scans from Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

**It isn't so much what happens to you  
that matters as much as what  
you think about what  
happens to you**

**—Epictetus, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century  
Greek philosopher**

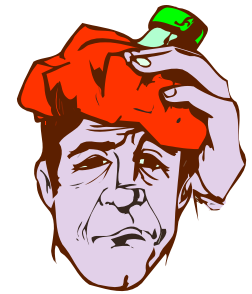
**Earlier in life, reportedly his leg  
was broken deliberately by his  
slave master -- and it healed crooked**



**Wikipedia**

**According to researcher Al Seibert, no stress exists in any situation unless an individual human brain perceives something as a stressor and experiences strain. The *stress* is less the result of what actually occurs or exists objectively and far more because of the way in which the brain perceives what is happening.**

**This means that stress is as unique as both your fingerprints and your brain. Its subjectivity is reminiscent of an old saying: *One person's pleasure is another person's pain.***





**Even in the absence of any stress, the female stress signaling system is more sensitive from the start**

—Debra Bangasser PhD



**Study results have shown that the female brain tends to overreact to a stressor; the male brain tends to underreact**

**20:80 Rule: only 20% of the “stress” is due to the event itself; 80% is due to what you think about the event and the weight you give to it**

**How aware are you?**

**Does the slash on a “no smoking” sign  
run toward the bottom right or toward  
the bottom left?**

**The slash runs toward the bottom right**



**How aware are you?**

**A standard paper clip has  
how many curves?**

**Three curves**



## 4. Be Intentional!

**Older adults who have the attitude that life circumstances are manageable, meaningful, and that you are in control of your life (at least to some degree) tended to have stronger Immune systems and better health**

**The most important factor in healthy aging is life satisfaction**



**—Bernice Neugarten, University of Chicago**

**Smile at others intentionally**  
**Do random acts of kindness intentionally**  
**Follow a Longevity Lifestyle intentionally**  
**The way of “least resistance” may take you where you have no desire to go**



**As Helen Keller put it: I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.**

**Successful agers tend to be intentional; they control what they can and tend to live life with great enthusiasm**

**As one supercentenarian put it, “I’m far too busy and happy to die young . . .”**



***Give me courage to change what must be altered, serenity to accept what cannot be helped, and the insight to know the one from the other*** —Reinhold Niebuhr (1937)



**How aware are you?**

**A regulation highway stop sign has how  
many sides?**

**Eight sides**



## 5. Laugh and have fun

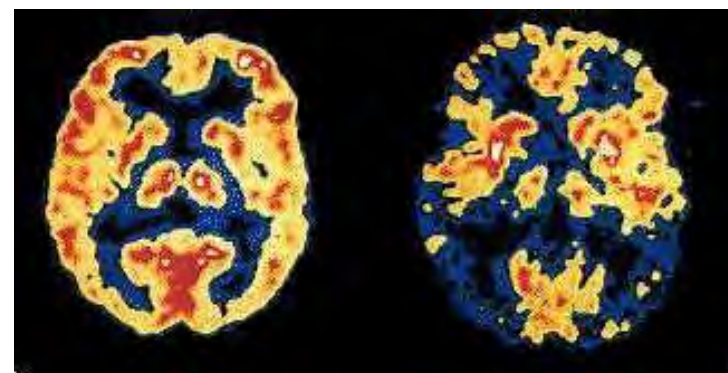
**Studies suggest that you need a minimum of 30 mirthful laughs per day but that the average American gets less than half that amount**



**Mirthful laughter is a whole brain experience! Use a sense of humor to trigger laughter, which then triggers endorphins, the brain's natural morphine plus other neurotransmitters and chemicals**

**Studies at UC Berkeley found a significant association between higher levels of cognitive activity over a lifetime and lower levels of beta-amyloid, a protein that is the hallmark of Alzheimer's.**

**Scans: people with no Alzheimer's symptoms, who had engaged in Cognitively stimulating activities throughout their lives, had fewer beta-amyloid deposits.**



**Normal**

**Alzheimer's**

**Learn, hone your sense of humor, laugh and last . . .**