

The pessimistic British poet Philip Larkin famously said, "Man hands on misery to man." "It deepens like a coastal shelf," says the narrator.

Those sentiments have been around for a long time. The notion goes, we become who our parents were. The apple, after all, never falls far from the tree.

Fortunately, psychologists are a less gloomy bunch than poets and folklorists. It's understandable. They have access to the most up-to-date scientific evidence, and the news is good: our brains are more flexible than many previously thought.

It's referred to as "neuroplasticity" by experts. In plain English, this suggests that we can all improve. In addition, the better persons we become as a result of adopting new and improved behaviors. Even better, we can assist our children to acquire qualities that will help them lead meaningful and successful lives from an early age.

The Yes Brain, by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, comes to this conclusion.

This book is a thoughtful and practical guide to mindful parenting, full of intriguing information and creative methods to help both you and your children thrive.

It reveals the route to the state they call the Yes Brain — an open-minded view that says "yes" to the world and accepts hardship in stride — by focusing on the essential qualities of harmony, endurance, insight, and empathy.

The next chapters will teach you:

- how to educate your child to manage their emotions and self-control;
- why seeing things through the eyes of a bystander might help you stay calm;
- why are children born selfish, but they don't have to stay that way.

Chapter 1 - The Yes Brain is a way of thinking that encourages you and your children to be more open, creative, and resilient.

For 30 seconds, close your eyes and repeat the word "no" to yourself. What are your thoughts? You're probably tense and uninspired. Instead, try saying "yes." Isn't that a lot better?

This is due to the fact that affirmation has a calming and relaxing impact.

Like most people, you undoubtedly want the best for yourself and your children, which includes having an open, welcoming attitude toward the world.

That is, in essence, what the Yes Brain is.

It's a way of being in the world that makes you more open to new experiences and allows you to live a more meaningful life.

Check the first section, for example. You're ready to take on difficulties when you're receptive. You're adaptable and able to think logically.

The No Brain, on the other hand, is the polar opposite. It's a defensive and reactionary mindset. This is an issue since it makes it harder to connect with others and make smart judgments.

When presented like that, the Yes Brain obviously outperforms the No Brain.

Now, how can you cultivate this mindset?

Being responsive may appear to be an elusive aim. As an adult parent, however, there are real techniques you may take to start creating a Yes Brain.

Its four basic qualities are an excellent place to start. Balance, resiliency, insight, and empathy are four of them. All of these topics are covered in detail in the following chapters.

What about children, though?

Well, one thing leads to another. Your children are more likely to inherit key Yes Brain qualities if you model them for them. There are a few ways that might assist you with this.

Take, for example, Alex. Teddy, his kid, would have a fit if anything didn't go his way while playing soccer.

Trying to humiliate Teddy is a no-brainer approach. It would say things like, "Other kids don't weep when they miss a shot, and why should you?"

Fortunately, Alex was able to benefit from the writers' knowledge. Rather than humiliate his kid, he adopted a Yes Brain approach and assisted Teddy in broadening his tolerance window.

That's essentially a method of increasing the number of things we can see without "losing it."

Teddy learned deep breathing methods, while Alex learned how to sympathize with his kid and console him when things went wrong. Teddy eventually calmed down enough to listen and recognize his own conduct.

Chapter 2 - The Yes Brain is more than just an attitude; it also encourages brain development and integration.

The majority of people feel that who you are as a youngster shape who you are later in life. Nature overcomes nurture, even if external conditions have a role. According to this theory, an unsympathetic kid will grow up to be an uncaring adult.

However, scientific data indicates that this is not the case. The human mind is not present at all; rather, it is highly flexible and evolves as a result of a person's experiences, a phenomenon known as neuroplasticity.

This implies you have the ability to change not only your behavior but also the structure of your brain! To do so, you'll need to learn how to activate your mind in specific ways.

The method for building a Yes Brain described in the next chapters is based on the most recent interdisciplinary research in personal and social neurobiology or IPNB.

But, what is it exactly?

IPNB focuses on how the brain, cognition, and interpersonal connections influence human identity.

Integration is the central theme of the topic. That is, integrating the many regions of your brain is an important element of your overall well-being.

A brain that is well-integrated is adaptable and versatile, as well as coherent, energetic, and steady. Who wouldn't want something like that?

So, if you want to cultivate a Yes Brain, you'll need to start using your brain in ways that promote integration and the growth of some of its most essential components.

The cerebral cortex is one of them. It takes time for this part of the brain to grow. When you're in your mid-twenties, it generally achieves full maturity.

The prefrontal cortex, or PFC for short, is a sub-region of this important section of the brain.

That is the driving force behind the majority of your actions. Emotional regulation, personal insight, and empathy are all regulated by the Yes Brain here.

To put it another way, you're employing your Yes Brain while your PFC is activated.

As a result, paying greater attention to this area of the brain is beneficial. The more you interact with it, the bigger it gets. As a result, your brain becomes more interconnected as a whole.

Let's look at an example from the real world. Let's say you're reading a story to your youngster and you inquire them why they believe the heroine is unhappy. What you're doing is giving your youngster a chance to practice empathy and social interaction. In effect, you're assisting them in strengthening their brain circuitry. You'll discover more about the Yes Brain's major traits in the coming chapters.

Chapter 3 - Recognizing your children's emotions and allowing them to play aids in the development of emotional equilibrium.

Consider the last time your youngster had a temper tantrum. Isn't it simple to respond hastily and punish them?

It's crucial to remember, however, that most children lose control of their emotions for one obvious fact: their brains aren't yet matured enough to handle their reactions to certain situations. Because they despise being out of control just as much as you do.

Instead of disciplining or giving in to your child's requests, you should do two things. To begin, acknowledge their situation. After that, you may start assisting them in developing skills that will allow them to restore self-control.

Take, for example, one of the writers' clients. Every time she left her kid off at school, he began crying.

Telling him that he's a "big guy" who can handle it is a common No Brain answer.

A new approach is suggested by the Yes Brain attitude. In this case, the best thing to do was to try to understand her son's sentiments. This offered a basis for her to assist him in developing coping techniques.

Sitting down with him and creating an illustrated book about school mornings was one excellent method. This allowed him to show how tough it was for him to say goodbye while simultaneously highlighting how much fun he had at school once he got there.

The following step was to speak with her son's instructors. They decided that she could stay in the drop-off area for a bit longer, and after gradually reducing the durations each day, her son felt comfortable going to school on his own.

Teaching youngsters to pay attention to how they're feeling is an excellent approach to assisting them in regaining their emotional equilibrium and tuning into their emotional condition.

Explaining sentiments in terms of zones is one method to achieve this. They're in the "green zone" when everything is going smoothly. If they're angry, worried, or scared, on the other hand, they're in the "red zone." They're in the "blue zone" when they're unhappy, agitated, or just want to be left alone.

That's a fantastic technique to help youngsters picture and understand their emotions without implying that they're negative. What's the bottom line? It progressively teaches children that they have options in how they respond to various circumstances.

So this, in the end, is empowering. Children realize that they don't have to be victims of their emotions after they've been taught this.

Chapter 4 - Explaining the notion of resilience to your children and promoting risk-taking are two ways to help them develop resilience.

Life is unpredictably unexpected. The best-laid plans may go astray at any time.

It's crucial to instill a feeling of resilience in your child if you want them to succeed in life. Recovering from failure and mastering hardship will only serve them well in the future.

But how can you instill such a critical mindset?

In order to get started, encourage your children to take chances while you are standing by in the wings ready to catch them if they fall.

Assume you have a Derek-named son. All he wants to do is play Little League baseball. However, there is one stumbling block: he is terrified.

You should be encouraging and helpful in circumstances like these. In this situation, that means encouraging him to give it a go and showing up for his first session.

It's possible that the first practice may be difficult, but with experience, it will get easier. Derek would eventually fall in love with his new passion and forget that he was ever frightened, to begin with.

Another method to foster resilience in your children is to teach them about the idea and how to cope when things go wrong.

Alana, a nine-year-old girl, is an example. She was so worried that when things didn't go as planned, she had panic attacks. Even forgetting her meal may cause her to experience severe anxiety.

When the writers first met Alana, they taught her about the colorful zones mentioned in a previous chapter. They told her that when things were going well, she was in the green zone, and when they weren't, she was in the red zone. They then set a goal for her to spend as much time as possible in the former.

It was hard to prevent being caught in a red zone totally so they taught her coping methods such as deep breathing to help her cope. Another approach was the "worry bully," a fictitious character who sat on her shoulder and with whom she might converse.

Alana was overjoyed the following time she walked into the office. The strategies worked! This is when she was informed about resilience and that the more she learned about calming down when she was stressed out, the more she would be able to handle it.

Chapter 5 - Teach your children early on how to practice insight and how to teach it to themselves.

You're unlikely to take a step back and examine your conduct when you're yelling at your kids. However, establishing the habit of insight may be beneficial to both you and your children.

It's all about being aware of and controlling your thoughts.

So, what's the best way to go about achieving that?

The first step is to look at things from a different angle. When you feel yourself erupting, pausing for a second and placing yourself in the shoes of a spectator is a fantastic approach to get understanding.

Assume you're driving your two children to a destination on a scorching summer day. They start moaning and arguing because the air conditioner is broken.

You might feel yourself sliding into your own unique danger zone. Your strained tolerance is about to give up the ghost.

Take a deep breath and envision yourself as a bystander at this point.

This fictitious bystander isn't there to pass judgment. She recognizes that everyone has powerful emotions and that no one should be ashamed of them. They are, after all, simply another type of feeling.

She does nothing but observes. She pays attention to the sensations, pictures, and ideas that give context to how you're experiencing. She tells you that you're exhausted and that your children are simply acting like children. She recommends that before speaking with them, she take a moment to relax.

That is wisdom.

Even if you find it difficult to grasp insight in the heat of the moment, you can still teach it to your children at a young age by setting an example.

Take, for example, an eight-year-old youngster who becomes "hangry" if he hasn't eaten in a few hours.

Talk to him if he's not having a tantrum over his feelings. The concept of colored zones is useful in this situation. By comparing the red and green zones to a volcano, you can better understand them. "You explode like a volcano when you reach the peak of the red zone!" you can exclaim.

“It’s fine to feel upset,” you could add, “but wouldn’t it be wonderful if you could take a break and prevent yourself from exploding?”

This is an excellent method of assisting children in managing their emotions. It makes no difference what their volcano trigger is – homesickness for some, worry for others. Teaching children that they have a choice in how they respond to circumstances from an early age allows them to break free from habitual behaviors.

Chapter 6 - Empathy may be cultivated in your children through a variety of methods.

When it comes to evolutionary growth, did you realize that the selfishness of children helps them survive?

Luckily, Mother Nature has placed more than one trait on us. Individuals are also evolved to care for others, according to studies. Even better, it begins at a young age.

This takes us to the fourth and last essential Yes Brain trait: empathy. That is, the ability to care about and comprehend the sentiments of others.

If you’re concerned that your child isn’t particularly empathic, keep in mind that empathy is a talent that can be acquired.

Consider Devin. His parents were concerned since their little youngster seemed unconcerned about others.

A variety of concerning behavioral patterns emerged as a result of this. At school, he harassed his peers and thought that everyone who disagreed with him was just wrong.

However by the time he was 16 — a famously self-centered age for most kids! – things had entirely changed. Devin had matured into a loving and considerate individual. In fact, he was so considerate that he would gladly forego going out with his friends in order to spend meaningful time with his father.

So, what went wrong?

His parents, on the other hand, used successful methods to foster compassionate conduct. This includes role-playing activities as well as demonstrating empathy for others.

This simply goes to show how quickly kids can grow up!

You may alter your children’s minds on the world around them by following Devin’s parents’ example.

There are, however, alternative possibilities.

If your child is behaving selfishly, explain to them how other, less fortunate individuals live. You might, for example, explain how much the homeless endure in the cold or even take them to a homeless shelter.

You might also assist them in developing an empathic vocabulary. One method is to educate them on how to "talk from the I." They become more attuned to emotion rather than lashing out at others when you encourage them to talk about their feelings.

This requires a lot of listening. Giving them your undivided attention is the greatest approach to nurture it. When your children have an issue, pay attention to them. This normalizes listening to others. They'll eventually pick up the habit on their own.

The Yes Brain: How to Cultivate Courage, Curiosity, and Resilience in Your Child by Daniel Siegel, Tina Payne Bryson Book Review

The way we interact with the environment changes when we have a good mentality. Balance, resilience, insight, and empathy are four important character characteristics that make up the Yes Brain. If you instill these values in your children, they will be well-prepared for life. This does not imply that you must always be flawless. In reality, the Yes Brain is all about progressively learning and allowing you and people you care about to become their best selves.

Allow your youngsters to go around and play!

Many parents regard playtime as little more than a game of chance. They attempt to jam extracurricular activities like learning to play the piano or sports into their children's calendars. However, fooling around is an important aspect of human growth. We start thinking creatively and stretching our limitations when we play in an unstructured, unsupervised fashion. This improves a wide range of cognitive processes, including problem-solving, planning, predicting consequences, and dealing with setbacks.

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