

science and spirituality  
there's *no* room for *no*!

"No" is such a powerful word that just seeing it on this page for one second causes your body to release a torrent of stress neurochemicals that will eventually damage your brain. But the word "yes" barely does anything to your brain because it doesn't pose a threat to survival. "Yes" means security and satiation. Give your pet some food and a pat on the head, and its happy brain tells it to take a nap. Not so with the human brain. Our frontal lobes constantly generate streams of positive and negative thoughts about the future. They're just fantasies, but the unconscious brain doesn't always distinguish between fiction and fact. It simply believes what we are thinking and reacts to every negative thought as if it were real.

Barbara Fredrickson, John Gottman, and Marcial Losada demonstrated that if your ratio of positive to negative thoughts falls below three-to-one, you'll undermine your happiness. But if you generate a positivity ratio of five-to-one or higher, your relationships will thrive and your business will grow. But there's a neurological catch: when your brain evaluates anything, it first looks for what is wrong, giving less weight to the positive. We focus on the problems, disappointments, and disagreements, and we forget progress, successes, and appreciation for others.

To change this pattern, spend one day writing down every negative thought you have—you may have hundreds! On day two, write down every positive thought you have and calculate your positivity ratio. On day three, interrupt each negative thought and reframe it with an optimistic goal. In the evenings, write down three things you appreciated that day and meditate on all the positive events. At the end of seven days, your self-esteem and satisfaction with life will have improved, your positivity ratio will increase, your work will excel, and the people in your life will smile at your transformation. Do so for the next eight weeks, and you'll actually begin to change the structure and functioning of your brain.



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*How God  
Changes  
Your Brain*.