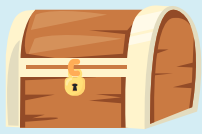







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More Inside This Quarter

-  Did you know?
-  Creative Chronicles
-  Breakthroughs
-  Your Playground
-  Mindful Pause



Favourite Finds

"The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down" by Zen Buddhist teacher Haemin Sunim emphasizes the benefits of embracing slowness, leading to increased self-awareness and contentment.

The book encourages readers to pause, breathe, and engage with the world mindfully, compassionately, and openly. It's perfect for moments when you're feeling low, offering the comfort of a warm hug in book form. Instead of reading it cover to cover, it's best enjoyed when you need a bit of inspiration or a pick-me-up. Sweet and simple, this book offers a wealth of wisdom.



Favourite Finds

"Inside Out 2" delves into the complexities of the human mind, reuniting core emotions Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust, and introducing new ones like Surprise and Regret.

A new element, Riley's "Sense of Self," is explored, housing memories and feelings that shape her beliefs. Anxiety, the antagonist, separates Riley from her core self. Balancing humor and poignancy, the film tackles themes of mental health, self-discovery, and resilience, making it both relatable and impactful.

Neuroimaging studies show that anxiety alters the brain's structure and function, especially in the amygdala and prefrontal cortex. Stressful or traumatic experiences can trigger or worsen anxiety.

Did You know?



Research is exploring the interaction between genetics and environment. Mindfulness, exercise, and dietary changes are proving effective in reducing anxiety symptoms and are being incorporated into treatment plans.



Neuroplasticity: Unlocking Your Brain's Potential

Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's incredible ability to change and reorganize itself throughout life in response to learning, experiences, and even injuries. This remarkable process involves the formation and strengthening of neural connections (synapses) between neurons. When we learn something new or practice a skill, neuroplasticity allows our brain to create new connections or strengthen existing ones, helping us remember and perform tasks more efficiently over time.

Imagine your brain as a vast jungle filled with paths. Learning something new or practicing a skill is like creating new trails or reinforcing existing ones. Initially, these new paths might be weak and hard to navigate, but with practice, they become stronger, making the task easier. For example, learning to ride a bike might be difficult at first because the bike path in your brain is new. However, with practice, this path becomes a super highway, making riding effortless.

During the first few years of life, a child's brain undergoes rapid growth, creating a multitude of synapses. As we grow, some connections are strengthened while others are pruned away, a process known as synaptic pruning. This selective strengthening and elimination of connections help our brain adapt and improve throughout our lives, allowing us to keep learning and acquiring new skills, no matter our age.

Encouraging Neuroplasticity

You can foster neuroplasticity by engaging in enriching activities such as:

- Learning a new instrument or language
- Traveling to new places
- Acquiring new skills
- Ensuring adequate rest and sleep

Creative and Mindful Practices

Research has shown that creating art, whether through drawing, painting, or sculpting, enhances neural connectivity and cognitive function. A study published in "Frontiers in Human Neuroscience" found that visual art production increases connectivity in the brain's default mode network, which is involved in creativity and introspection. Engaging in art stimulates brain regions responsible for cognitive processes and creative thinking, thus supporting neuroplasticity.

Similarly, mindfulness practices such as meditation and mindful breathing significantly impact brain structure and function. A study in "Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging" found that participants in mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs showed increased grey matter density in brain areas related to learning, memory, and emotional regulation. Regular mindfulness practice leads to structural changes in the brain that support neuroplasticity.

Lifelong Learning and Adaptation

No matter your age, your brain is always ready to grow stronger and explore new things. Embrace activities that challenge and stimulate your brain to keep learning and adapting, ensuring a lifetime of growth and mental well-being





Narrative Healing: The Transformative Impact of Storytelling on Mental Well-Being

Recent research has increasingly focused on storytelling and its positive impact on mental well-being, highlighting numerous benefits across diverse populations and contexts. Studies have shown that storytelling offers multifaceted advantages, from therapeutic interventions to educational applications and cultural preservation. Storytelling serves as a powerful tool for self-expression, coping with adversity, and enhancing psychological resilience.

A 2016 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* found that narrative therapy significantly improved mood and self-esteem in participants with depression compared to a control group. Greenhalgh and Hurwitz (1999) emphasized the therapeutic potential of patient narratives in medical settings, illustrating how storytelling can help patients cope with illness and trauma.

Pennebaker and Chung (2007) demonstrated that expressive writing about traumatic experiences can improve physical and psychological health outcomes, enhancing resilience and coping mechanisms. Research by Lepore and Smyth (2002) showed that narrative disclosure of stressful experiences can lead to improved immune function and fewer health problems over time.

McAdams and McLean (2013) highlighted the role of personal narratives in identity formation and psychological well-being, underscoring how storytelling contributes to a sense of coherence and meaning in life.

Bibliotherapy, a form of therapeutic storytelling, has been shown to be effective in treating various mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression (Armstrong & Thomas, 2003).

Cross-cultural research by Gottschall (2012) has shown that storytelling is a universal human activity that plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage, promoting intergenerational communication, and fostering resilience in diverse cultural contexts.

STORY



Breakthroughs



During recent sessions, K was paired with another boy, J, with whom he had previously had 2-3 sessions. Notably, J is usually very particular about having only the therapist in his space during sessions.

This particular session involved a ball-catching game with different variations. The rules were that the loser of each round had to step out and color a dragon printout. Although K won the game, he expressed a desire to color the sheet as well, so everyone ended up coloring individual sheets together.

While they were coloring and chatting, K suggested that he, J, and the therapist could color more sheets in the next session. This moment marked a significant breakthrough: K willingly accepted another child into his space, a promising step toward improved social interaction.

your playground

This game is a wonderful way for work colleagues to engage in fun and grateful actions, fostering a positive mindset and encouraging connection through shared experiences.



mindful pause

mindful eating

Mindful eating involves being fully present and engaged with the eating process. It means eating slowly, savoring each bite, and paying close attention to the flavors, textures, and aromas of your food. This practice encourages you to avoid distractions such as watching TV or using your phone while eating, allowing you to fully appreciate your meal.

To practice mindful eating, start by taking a few deep breaths before your meal to center yourself. As you eat, focus on chewing thoroughly and enjoying the experience of each bite. Notice the colors, smells, and tastes of your food. Pay attention to your body's hunger and fullness cues, stopping when you feel satisfied rather than overly full.

Incorporating mindful eating into your daily routine can help you develop a healthier relationship with food, reduce overeating, and enhance your overall eating experience. Whether you're having a quick snack or a full meal, take the time to practice mindful eating throughout the day.

Wall of Fame

Celebrating a year of impact



- **Improved Mental Well-Being:** 85% of clients reported a significant reduction in anxiety and depression symptoms.
- **Enhanced Coping Skills:** 90% of clients developed better strategies for managing stress and adversity.
- **Increased Self-Esteem:** 80% of clients experienced a boost in self-confidence and self-worth.
- **Stronger Relationships:** 75% of clients reported improved communication and relationships with family and friends.
- **Personal Growth:** 70% of clients felt more aligned with their personal goals and experienced a greater sense of purpose.

GRATITUDE bingo

Let's reflect on our colleagues and share gratitude amongst each other. Tick each one off as you complete them.

1 compliment a colleague	2 leave a kind note on someone's desk	3 action a favourite on the colleague profile	4 write positive affirmations for someone
5 buy someone their favourite drink	6 contribute to collection for a school family in need	7 bring lunch for a friend	8 get to know a new face better
9 write a thank you note to a colleague	10 offer to cover someone's duty	11 celebrate a colleague's achievements	12 contribute to the Gratitude Jar
13 go watch a movie with your colleague	14 self-care: prioritise yourself	15 send out a colleague shout out	16 ask about someone's family
17 enjoy a picnic with your team	18 Share a funny anecdote with a friend	19 spend lunch with someone new	20 share a meme with a colleague



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Meet the Team

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Everyone has a story...

