

UNDERSTANDING OUR IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOUR



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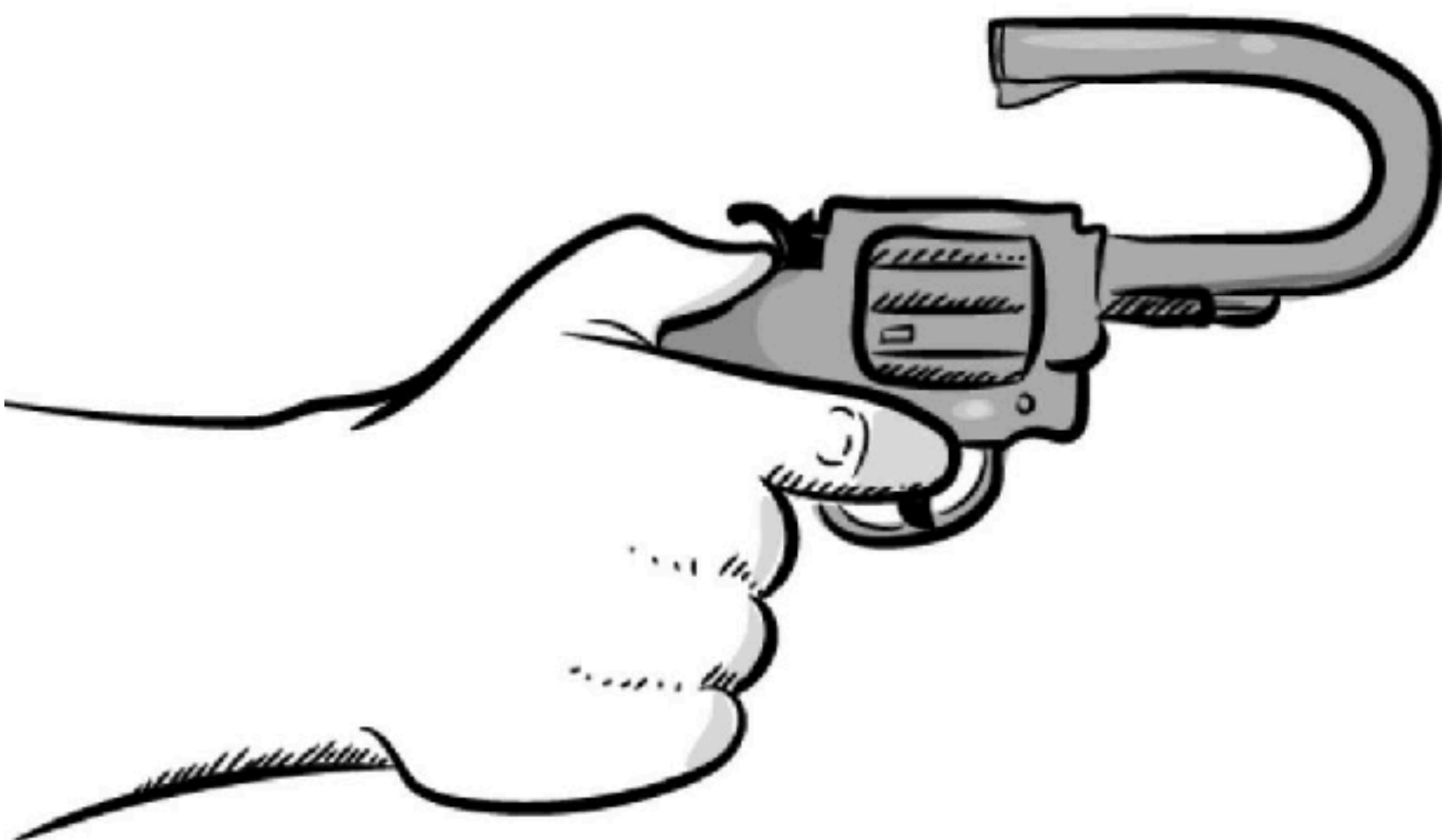


Understanding Irrational Behaviour

It turns out batshit-fucking-bonkers
has a name in the world of neuroscience.

It's called the
backfire effect.

and it's a well-documented
psychological behavior.



In a rational world, people who
encounter evidence that
challenges their beliefs would
evaluate this evidence, and then
adjust their beliefs accordingly.

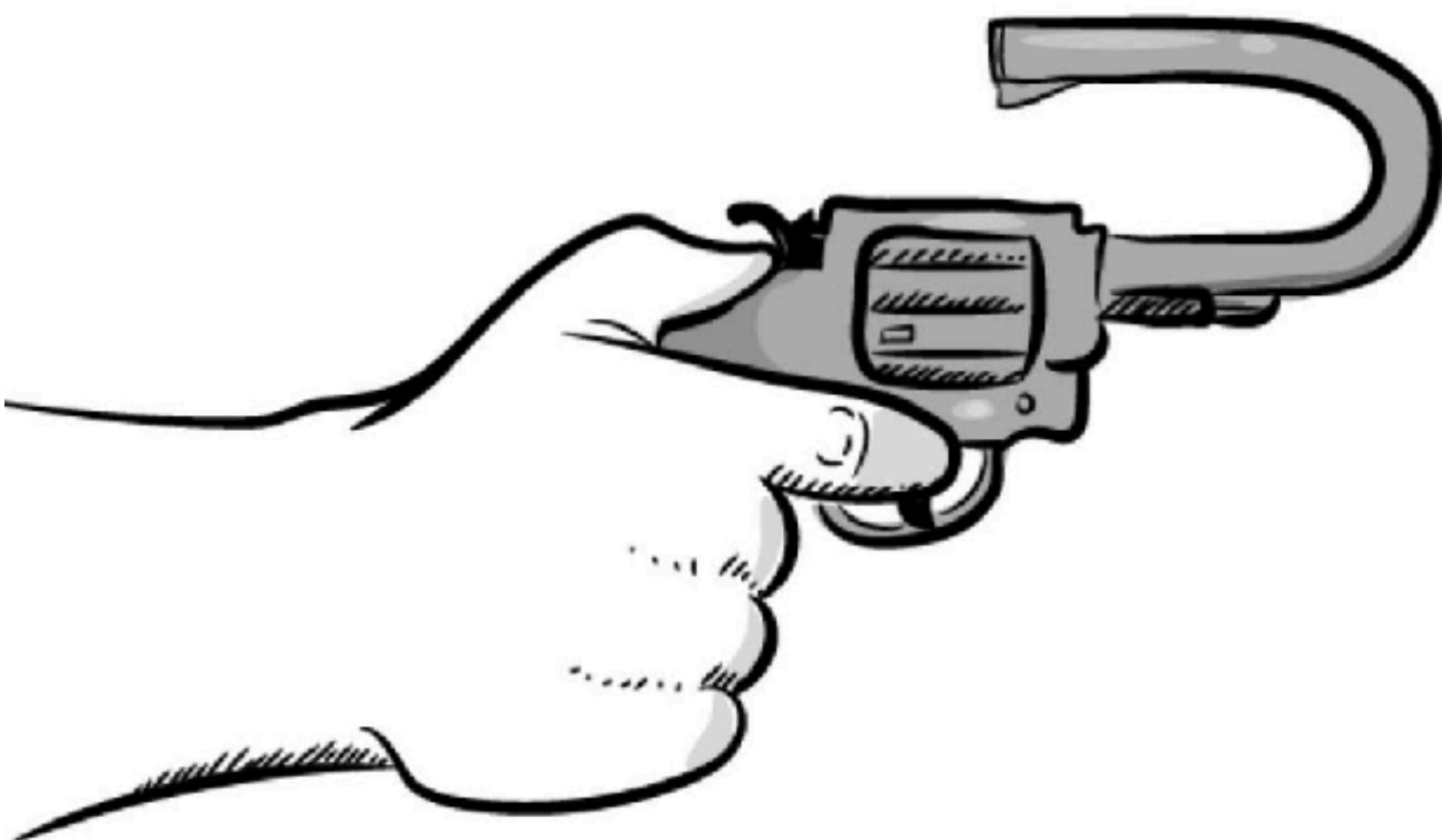
However, in reality this is
seldom the case.

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Often, when people encounter evidence that should cause them to doubt their beliefs, they reject this evidence, and strengthen their support for their original position.

This occurs due to a cognitive bias psychologists call the backfire effect.

Understanding Irrational Behaviour

The Streisand Effect is the phenomenon whereby an attempt to hide, remove or censor information has the unintended consequence of publicising the information more widely.

It is named after entertainer Barbara Streisand whose attempt to suppress photographs of her residence in Malibu, inadvertently drew further public attention to it.

The original photos of beachfront properties were documenting erosion as part of a coastal records project for the purpose of influencing government policymakers.

Understanding Irrational Behaviour

Before Streisand filed her lawsuit, “image 3850” had been downloaded only six times: two of which were by Streisand’s own lawyers.

As a result of the case, public knowledge of the picture increased substantially.

More than 420,000 people downloaded the picture in the following month.

The Backfire Effect

When we are shown evidence that challenges our beliefs...

...we reject the evidence, and **strengthen** our support for our original beliefs.

Showing us proof that we are **wrong** often 'backfires'!

Essentially, when we argue against new information strongly enough, we end up with more arguments to support our position.

This causes us to believe that there is more proof in support of our viewpoint than there was before we were presented with the new evidence.



The Backfire Effect

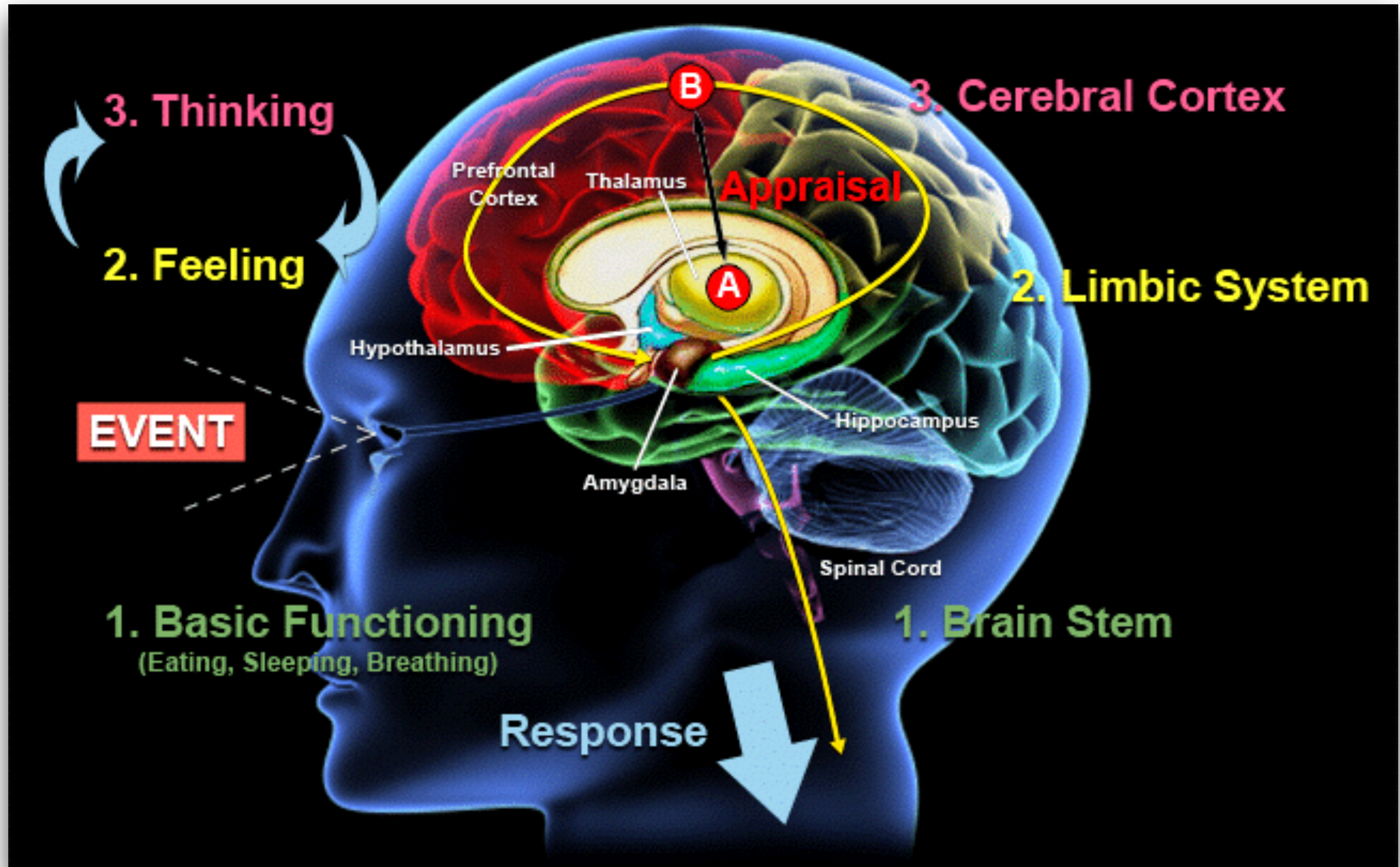
A study that examined voting preference showed that introducing people to negative information about a political candidate that they favour, often causes them to increase their support for that candidate.

A study that examined people's intent to vaccinate against the flu, found that when people who thought that the vaccine is unsafe were given information disproving myths on the topic, they often ended up with stronger resistance.

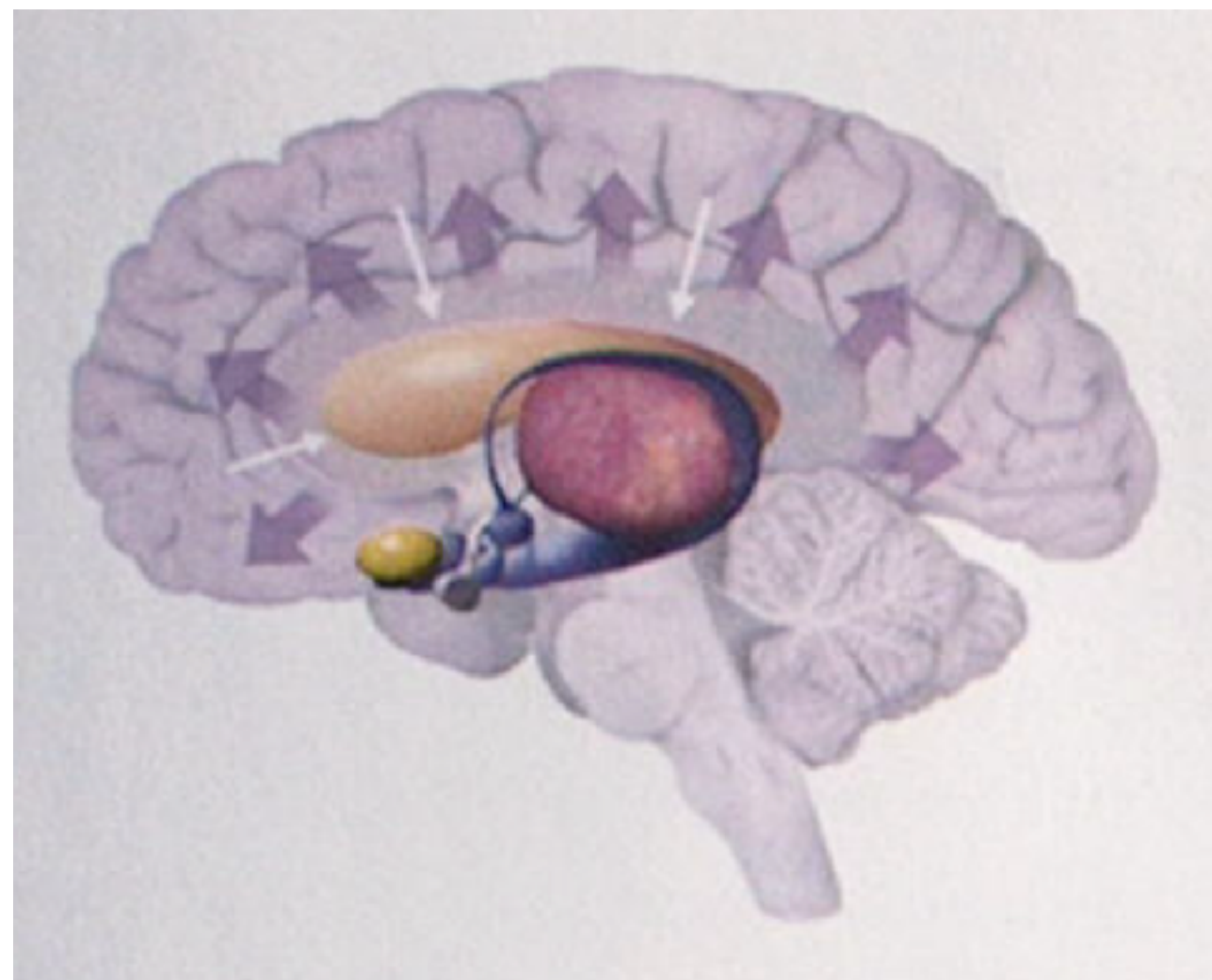
A study that examined misconceptions about politically-charged topics (such as tax cuts), found that giving people accurate information about these topics often causes them to believe in their original misconception more strongly.

A study which examined parents' attitude to vaccination, found that parents who are against vaccinating are given positive information, often become more likely to believe in a link between vaccination and autism.

OUR EMOTIONAL BRAIN



The traffic between the limbic system and the cortex flows in both directions. The roads from the limbic system to the cortex are like **superhighways** with lots of lanes while the traffic from the cortex back to the limbic system is like a **country road**.



Effectively this means that our emotions call the shots as far as our unconscious behaviour is concerned, and there is very little we can do except become aware of it.

The Backfire Effect

When our 'view of the world' (our beliefs) are challenged we have the same reaction as if we were physically under attack.

Our instinct is to
fight, defend, protect
- even attack.

*This is why logical
presentations don't sell.*

Information entering the thalamus is normally shunted in two directions.

One is a slow route to the cortex, while the other is a shortcut, which effectively means that the amygdala has advance warning that something potentially threatening might be happening.



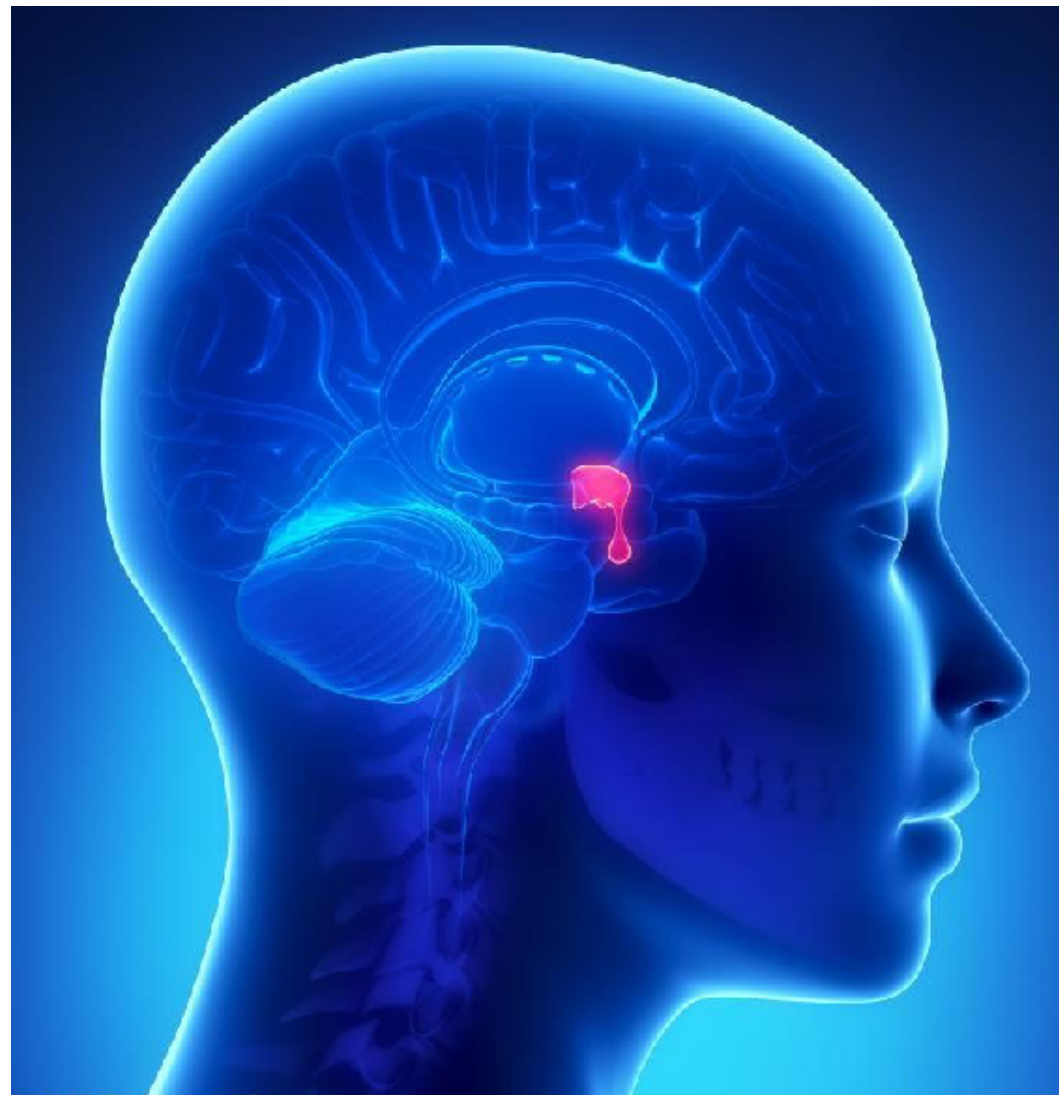
In milliseconds, the hazy notion is checked against its unconscious memory store and something vague but threatening appears to be there.

The amygdala signals the hypothalamus to either *fight* or *flight*.



We respond accordingly, but by the time we do, the message has been passed to the amygdala from the conscious brain, which has checked all its records and then sent the results along a more leisurely route.

“Nothing to worry about”, is its normal message, but it’s too late, because the stress hormones produced have us at **panic stations**.



A memory gets burned into our neurons.

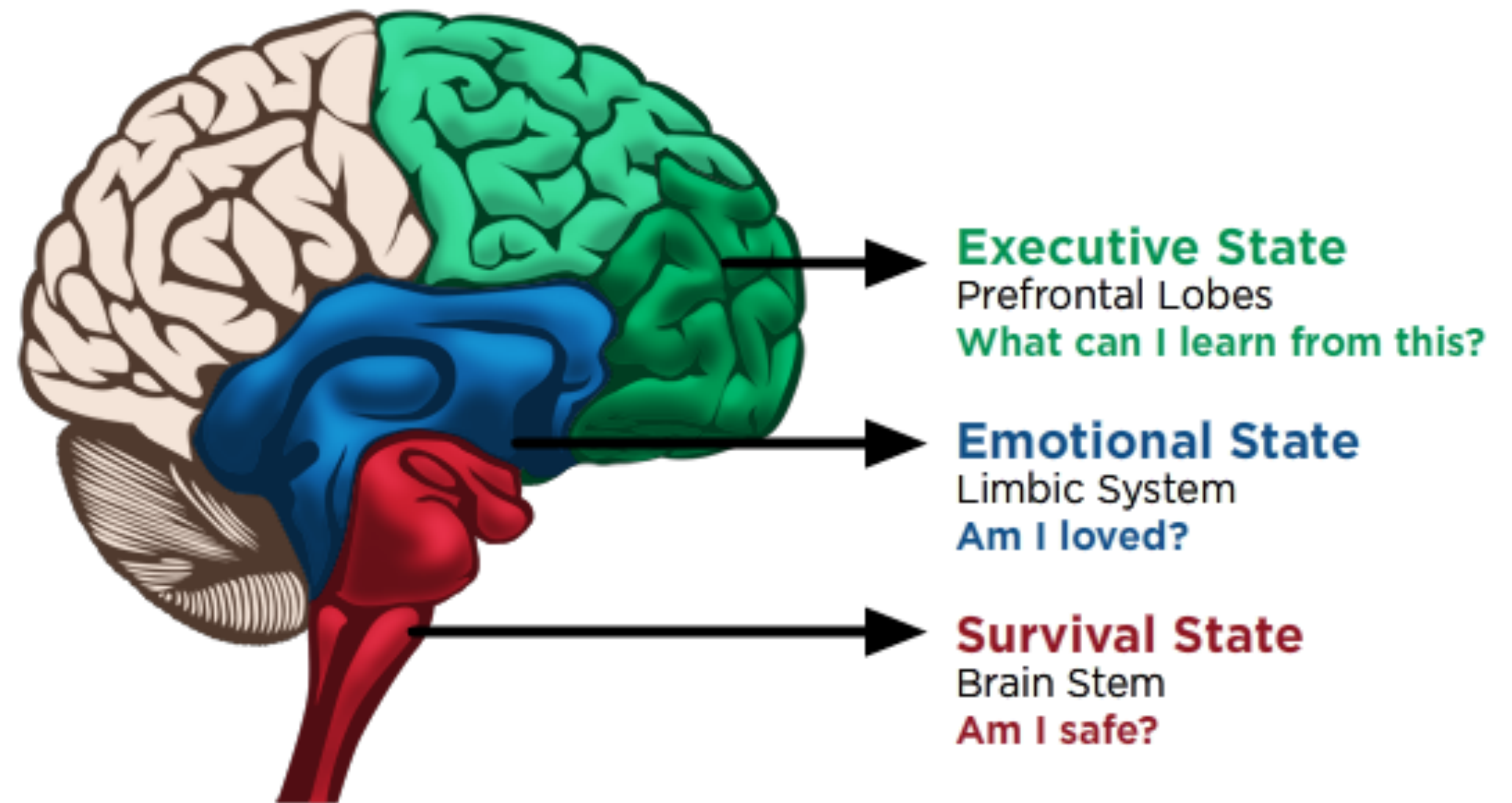
A conditioned circuit of fear is established at that moment.

We can re-experience the unconscious trauma and no amount of rational thinking will help.

Five Lymbic System Tonics

Research has proven the validity of five practical processes for keeping the Lymbic system fit and healthy.

The consequences of practicing these methodologies are that students are more grounded and less available to stress and drama.



1. ESSENTIAL OILS

There is clinical evidence that essential oils are absorbed into the bloodstream and then trigger the hippocampus.

This is mostly due to the amount of blood vessels in the lungs that take up the oils and then circulate them throughout the body, including to the brain.

Using a diffuser can help you experience the benefits of essential oils, or you can directly inhale them from the bottle or a cotton swab.

You can diffuse lavender to reduce stress, melaleuca to cleanse the air, wild orange to improve your overall mood frankincense for spiritual enlightenment, and peppermint essential oil to improve focus and energy.



2. DEEP BREATHING



Deep breathing exercises coupled with intentional relaxation of muscles quiets the fight-or-flight response since relaxed muscles send feedback to the alarm centers in the brain that there are no threats present.

4X4 Breathing:

Inhale for four seconds, holding your breath for four seconds and exhaling slowly for four seconds, repeating this for five to 10 minutes.

3. VISUALISATION

Visual stimuli have important influences on emotional health, socialization and well-being.

They can even be used to reduce anxiety disorders or symptoms of autism.

To practice, bring to mind in detail a place that makes you feel happy and relaxed.

Imagine or feel that the experience is entering deeply into your mind and body, keeping your muscles relaxed and absorbing positive emotions, sensations and thoughts of the experience.

4. BE MINDFUL, STILL & SILENT

This can help you cultivate gratitude, reduce stress, make you feel more connected to others, become more mindful/aware of good things in your life, and increase feelings of compassion, kindness and well-being.

5. EXERCISE

Exercise helps control stress, balance hormones (such as cortisol), raise immune function and lower inflammation.

One of the ways it does this is by training your autonomic nervous system/fight-flight-response to return to normal more quickly following periods of stress/arousal.

Assignments

1	Decide which of the 5 techniques you will experiment with in order to be more responsive & less reactive.
2	Commit to a time, a place & a duration for these experiments.
3	Share your results on the fB group.