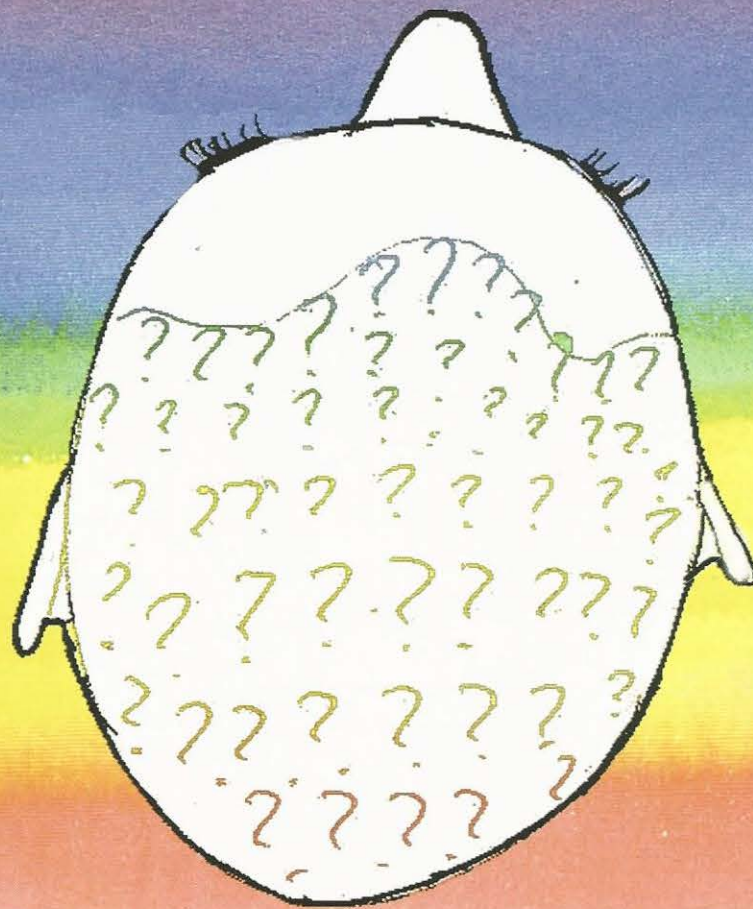


The Secret Inside Your Head to a Happier Life



Written by Deborah Hage, MSW

Approved and Recommended by The Advanced Parenting for Challenging Children Program

**THE SECRET
INSIDE YOUR HEAD
TO A
HAPPIER LIFE**

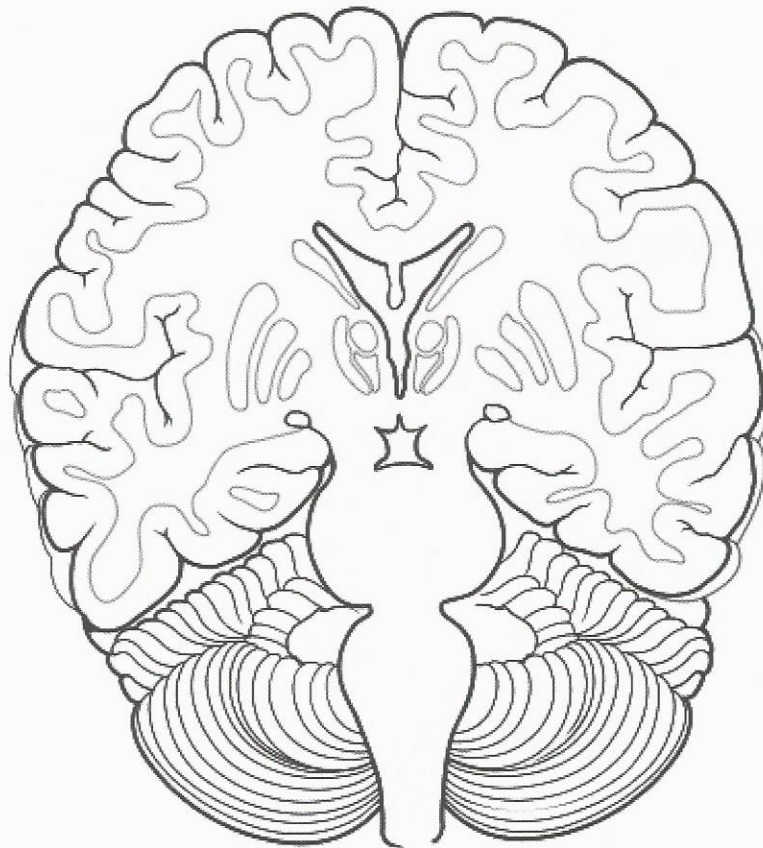
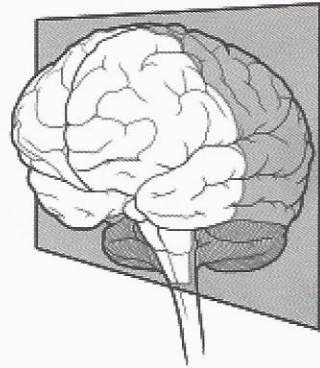
Written by
DEBORAH HAGE, MSW

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The Secret Inside Your Head

Draw a picture of your face and head.

This is what is behind your face, inside your head. It is called your brain.



Draw a picture of you feeling happy.

Draw a picture of you feeling sad.

Draw a picture of you feeling angry.

Draw a picture of you feeling afraid.

Emotions don't just show on your face. They can be seen inside your head as well. Your brain is like a small town. Your thoughts and emotions each have a separate address inside your brain. Pathways connect your thoughts and feelings to each other.

Draw a picture of your head from the inside. Label the different areas of your brain that are mad, sad, glad and scared. Connect the areas with roads and paths.

Your thoughts and feelings tell you how to behave. They can be seen on your face and can be seen in your actions.

Draw a picture of you doing something that makes you feel happy and connect the happy parts of your body to the happy parts of your brain on page 6.

Draw a picture of you doing something that makes you feel sad and connect the sad parts of your body to the sad parts of your brain.

Draw a picture of you doing something that makes you feel scared and connect the scared parts of your body to the scared parts of your brain.

Draw a picture of you being angry and connect the angry parts of your body to the angry parts of your brain.

Section 2

Do you ever wonder why you feel the way you do? Do you ever wonder why you behave the way you do?

CHILDREN BEHAVE THE WAY THEY BEHAVE BECAUSE THEY THINK THE WAY THEY THINK!

You learn to think and behave the way you do because of three things:

- 1) The way your birth parents thought and behaved.
- 2) The things you experienced before you were born when you were inside your birthmother.
- 3) The way you were cared for the first three years of life.

Draw your birthmother. If you have never seen her draw what you think she might have looked like. (You might look a little bit like her.) Ask adults who have read about her or knew your birthmother to describe her. What was she like? Was she tall or short?, thin or heavy? Did she smoke or drink? What color were her hair, skin, and eyes? Was she mostly happy or sad? Was she scared? Was she angry? Write words around her that you believe describe her.

How are you like your birth mother? Circle the words about your birth mother that describe you as well.

Did you have any control over the way your birth mother thought and behaved?

Section 3

Draw your birthfather. If you have never seen him draw what you think he might have looked like. (You might look a little bit like him.) Ask adults who have read about him or knew your birthfather to describe him. What was he like? Was he tall or short?, thin or heavy? Did he smoke or drink? What color were his hair, skin and eyes? Was he mostly happy or sad? Was he scared? Was he angry?

Write words around him that you believe describe him.

How are you like your birth father? Circle the words about your birth father that describe you as well.

Did you have any control over the way your birth father thought and behaved?

Section 4

Draw your birth mother while she is pregnant with you. Talk to people who might have known her or knew about her. What do you think your birthmother was thinking and feeling? Was her life easy or hard at that time? Where was she living? Who was she living with? Was she hungry? Was she happy, angry, sad and/or scared? After you have drawn her write words around her that might have described her.

Did your birthmother take drugs, drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes or pot while she was pregnant with you? If the answer is yes continue, If no do page 13 and not this one.

Draw you inside your birthmother's body while the poison she is taking in comes toward you.

What were you feeling? Mad, sad, glad or scared? Or all of them?

Draw your birthmother with you inside of her as a tiny baby. Draw the inside of your birth mother's head while she was pregnant with you. Label the parts of her brain that are mad, sad, glad and/or scared. Write words that describe what you think she was thinking and feeling. Draw paths from your mother's thoughts and feelings inside her head to the inside of your head.

Which of those thoughts and feelings do you have now?
Circle the feelings your birthmother had and you also have.

Did you have any control over the way your birthmother thought and behaved while she was pregnant with you?

Section 5

After you were born and during the first three years of your life it was your mother's job to take care of you. It was her job to make sure you felt loved. It was her job to treat you in loving ways. Babies feel loved when they are touched, rocked, smiled at, fed and when their mother looks into their eyes. When the baby cries the mother needs to comfort the baby in order for the baby to feel loved. When the baby feels loved during the first three years of life then the baby will learn to love. When the baby does not feel loved during the first two years of life then the baby will have a hard time learning to love.

Did you have a mother to take care of you when you were first born? Maybe your mother was not the same woman as your birthmother. Maybe you were in an orphanage, or in foster care, or adopted. Draw a picture of you and the person who took care of you. Did you do things together or not?

Did you have any control over the way your mother thought and behaved and took care of you when you were a tiny baby?

Draw yourself as a small child with whoever took care of you the most.

Who was it? Why was this person taking care of you?

Did you want this person to be your mother or did you want someone else to be your mother?

How did you act with the person who took care of you the most? Were you glad to be with her or not? Were you loving or afraid? Draw yourself and the person who took care of you doing something together.

Was it loving or not loving? Was it scary or safe? Was it happy or sad?

Write words to describe what you were thinking and feeling from the way you were being treated and taken care of.

Draw the inside of your brain as a small child. How much of your brain was filled with love by the people around you? How much was filled with fear by the people around you? How much was filled with anger? How much was filled with sadness?

Did you have any control over the way your caregiver thought and behaved and took care of you when you were a small child?

Section 6

Did your caregiver or mother hug you? _____

How did it make you feel? _____

Do you like to be hugged now? _____

Did your caregiver or mother smile at you a lot? _____

Do you like to smile at people and have them smile back now? _____

Did your caregiver or mother look lovingly into your eyes? _____

Do you like to look in people's eyes and have them look back? _____

What have you felt the most during your life so far? Have you felt mostly happy? Have you felt mostly sad? Have you felt mostly angry? Have you felt mostly afraid? _____

Draw the inside of your brain now. Label the parts mad, sad, glad and scared.

CHILDREN BEHAVE THE WAY THEY BEHAVE BECAUSE THEY THINK THE WAY THEY THINK!

Where did you learn to think the way you do?
Who taught you?

Where did you learn to behave the way you do?
Who taught you?

Did you have any control over the things you were taught in the past?

For sure you did not have any control over the things that happened to you and what you learned from your early life! But you do have control NOW! You are the only one who does have control over the way you think and behave. You can choose to let what has happened to you in the past control you or you can learn from the people you are with right now to think and feel and behave differently.

Do you like the way you think, feel and behave most of the time right now? Do you want to change? Draw your brain the way you would like it to be. How much of it do you want filled with mad, sad, glad and scared?

Section 7

In order to change your brain from one that is mostly mad, sad and scared to one that is mostly glad you have to ask yourself a few questions and be brave enough to give yourself honest answers. The first one is, "Are you happy?" (People who are happy have friends, get along with others, enjoy doing things for themselves and others, do not hit or lie or steal or hurt others.) Are you like other happy people you know or are you different?

If the answer is "Yes", meaning that right now you are mostly happy or very happy, then there is no reason for you to change and you can stay the way you are.

However, if the answer is "No", and you are willing to admit that you are not happy, then the next question is, "Are you willing to work hard to change?" Do you only want to be happy if it is easy or are you willing to put some effort into being happy? Changing the way your brain thinks and feels is going to take work. Are you willing to do it or would you rather stay unhappy if it means working?

If you would rather stay unhappy than work to change then the time to quit is right now. However, if you are willing to put some effort into learning how to be happy then the next question is, "Are you willing to work hard your parents 'way'?" If you were able to teach yourself how to be happy then you would have done it by now. You will need someone to show you the way, someone who is already happy and knows how to teach others to be happy. In order for your brain to be filled with mostly happy thoughts and feelings you must get a happiness coach – someone to teach you how to be happy.

Your happiness coaches are your parents. It is their job to take care of you. It is their job to rock you and give you lots of hugs, eye contact, good food, and smiles. It is their job to give you opportunities to learn.

Draw yourself with a brain that is mostly happy.

How does your brain change from being mostly mad, sad, and scared to being mostly happy? By paying attention to your happiness coach! When your parents tell you to do something you will get happier when you do it. It is that simple. Really. They are the experts on being happy. Say, "Yes", and DO it!

Draw you or a sports hero playing a favorite game or sport.

Do you or an athlete you admire learn to play the game or sport better when you teach yourself or when you let someone teach you?

Are you an expert on your game or sport or can you learn from a coach?

Do you get stronger or weaker when you do what the coach says to do?

If you want to learn from the coach then you must do what the coach says as the coach is the expert in the game. If you want to learn how to be happy then you must learn from your parents who are the experts at being happy. Do what they say and you will be happier and stronger. Guaranteed!

Section 8

Every time you do what your parents tell you to do the parts of your brain that are sad, mad or scared get smaller and weaker and the glad part of your brain gets bigger and stronger. Every time in the past that you said "No" to your parents the pathway to the mad, sad, and scared parts of your brain got bigger and bigger. All of your energy flowed to the "No" parts of your brain and made your ability to be happy weaker and weaker.

Draw your brain with big, wide paths to the "No" parts of your brain. Draw the "No" parts of your brain great big so they crowd out the glad parts.

Draw yourself with only "No" parts of your brain and without any glad parts to your brain. What do you look like? What are you doing when you are mostly mad, sad or scared?

How does having a wide "No" path work for you? Do you have more or less fun, happy times?

Every time now and in the future you say "Yes" to your parents the path to the glad part of your brain will get bigger and the glad part of your brain will get bigger and stronger. Draw your brain with the "Yes" part of your brain so big there is no room for the "No" parts. Draw your brain with a big wide path to the "Yes" part.

Draw yourself with only "Yes" parts of your brain and without any mad, sad or scared parts to your brain. What do you look like? What are you doing when you are mostly glad?

How does having a wide "Yes" path work for you? Do you have more or less fun times?

Section 9

You are the only one who can change your brain from a weak "No" brain, bossed around by mad, sad, and scared parts to a powerful "Yes" brain, filled with glad parts. No one can change it for you. You have to decide. It is up to your parents to give you lots of opportunities to say "Yes" to them. It is their job to give you lots of chores to do for them so that your brain has lots of opportunities to say "Yes" and make the glad part bigger and stronger.

When you say "Yes" to them it is good for you and for them. You will be more enjoyable to be around and they will like to do more things with you and take you more places. They will trust you to be cooperative. When you say "No" to them they will not want to take you places and they will find it more difficult to have you close by. They might ask you to go to your room when you are angry and uncooperative. They might take you to stay in another place for a few days so they can have fun times without worrying what you will do or not do. Draw yourself being mad, sad, or scared all by yourself in your room or staying some place else.

Draw family doing something happy and fun while you are in your room or away from them.

Draw you and your family doing something which makes all of you happy and which makes the happy part of your brain get bigger and stronger.

Draw yourself as an adult doing something fun with people who love you because you are respectful, responsible and fun to be with.

**Good luck in making yourself a new,
happier, more powerful brain
and having a new,
happier life with your happiness coaches**

-

your parents!