

# METACOGNITIVE SKILLS

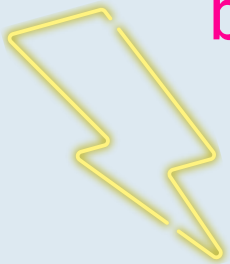


UNDERSTANDING  
EMOTIONAL  
HIJACKING

# Emotional Hijacking is:

The experience of being captured by your emotional reaction in response to stimuli.

Your thinking and behavior become guided by self-protective, default responses, not rational thinking.



AKA, those times when it feels like your emotions take control and you freak out, blow up at someone, or lose control.

# What Happens?

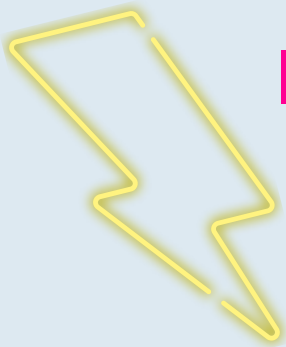
Info comes in through your senses and almost all of it goes to your *Neocortex* - the thinking part of your brain. It processes more slowly because it has more circuits.



BUT! There is a tiny bundle of neurons that skips your thinking brain and sends stuff that's really stimulating right to your reacting brain, your *Amydala*.

# The Amygdala

It's part of your Limbic System, aka the old school animal brain. One of the things it does is process emotions, both positive and negative ones.



It helps you quickly process stimuli. It is also on the look out for threats.

If it senses a threat, it hits the panic button and recruits the rest of your brain before the neocortex has a chance to think.

# What Happens?

When your brain feels threatened your instinctive, self-protective wiring tells you to defend yourself.



Your brain processes physical threats and emotional threats the same way. If you feel humiliated you can react the same you would if someone tried to hit you.

So, in that moment...you don't stop and think. You don't care about others. You just react. You get emotionally hijacked.

# Why Getting Hijacked is Hard



It is confusing.

It is usually embarrassing. You might have felt anger and frustration at first, but now you might also be feeling shame, vulnerability, distress, humiliation, fear, sadness, etc.

It is overwhelming.

You can hurt others without even thinking about it.

# What Do You Do After?

Try not to let shame eat you alive. Shame wants you to feel awful. Shame is a jerk. Try and tell shame to shut up.




## ***Practice Self- Compassion:***

- Say out loud "It happens to everyone."
- You are not a bad person, you had a bad moment.
- Feel your feelings, but don't let them own you.
- Remember humans are complicated, but don't ignore hurt you may have caused. Plan to repair it.
- If you admit your vulnerability it can actually makes things easier.

# New Brain v Old Brain

The neocortex, the thinking part of your brain is pretty new, so you have to train it.

 When we're upset we feel like we can't think straight because signals for strong emotions create Neural Static and makes things fuzzy.

Your brain is capable of profound change, but it is not easy. You have to be patient, understand what's going on, and practice.



# Hijacking isn't all bad

Fun Fact: you can actually also get hijacked by positive emotions. Think about a time you were overwhelmed with excitement.



Your limbic system can signal you to disconnect from someone who hurt you. BUT! It can also flood you with empathy love, and compassion.

It can make you want to connect with others, find comfort, and feel safe.

**You matter. Your experiences matter.**

**Other folks feel things just as strongly. Remember that next time you are in a conflict.**

**Metacognition is an act of self-compassion.**