

X and the Lizard Brain



Written by:

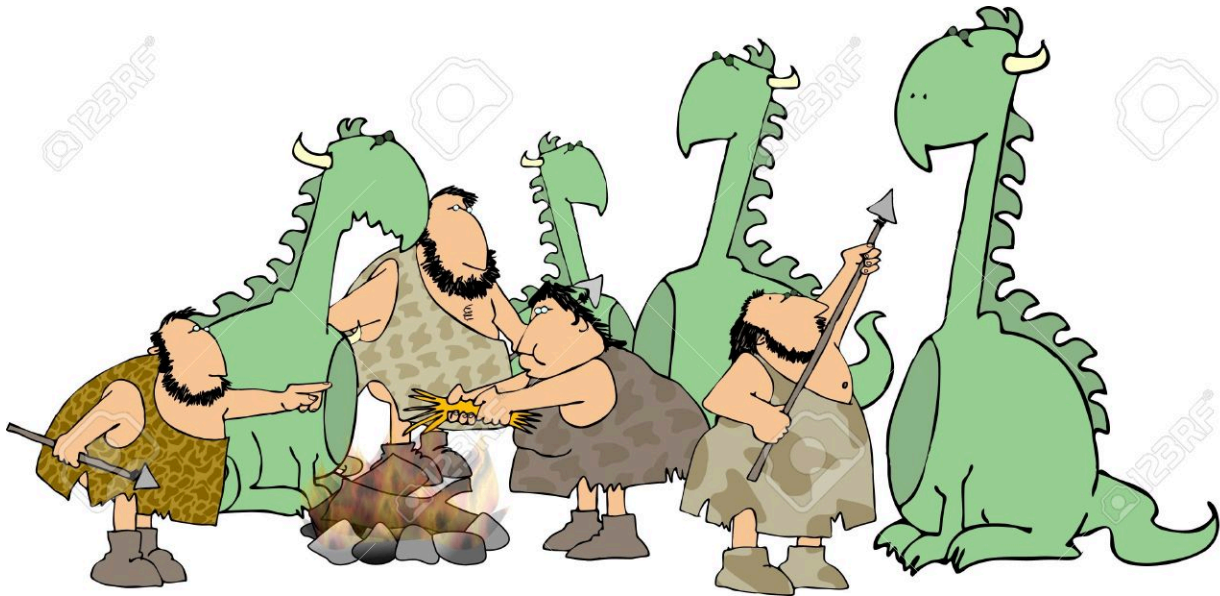
X

Hi! I am X and I am seven years old. I am good at lots of things. I try hard, even when it is challenging.

This book is all about my lizard brain. What! I really mean we all have lizard brains.



A long time ago, when dinosaurs roamed the earth, their brains were very small. Their amygdala only knew to run or attack each time it was scared by a predator. Cavemen came next and their amygdala did the same thing! But I will tell you a little secret!

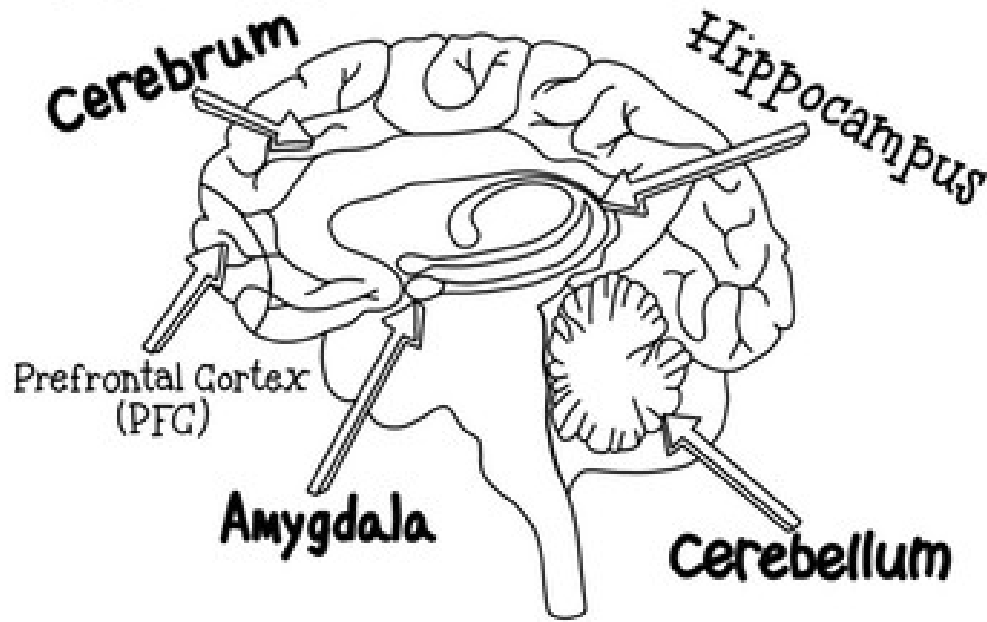


We can train our brain and the amygdala so it does not run away or get angry. We can stop it from flipping. That is what I call it when my amygdala reacts to something that makes me scared or angry.



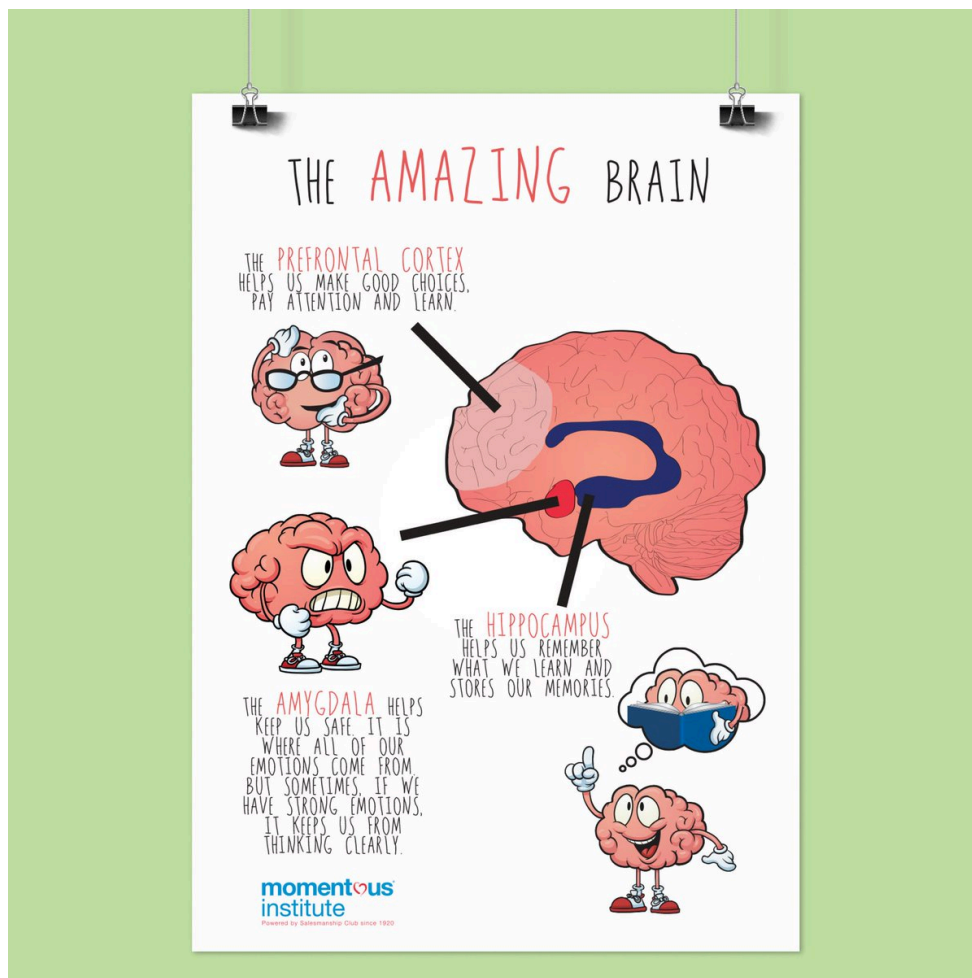
Let me tell you about my brain.

Parts of the Brain



- The Cerebrum helps us think and learn.
- The Hippocampus helps us to remember things that are very important.
- The Cerebellum helps us move our body parts and react to our emotions.
- The Prefrontal Cortex helps us make a choice and judge a situation.
- The Amygdala controls your emotions.

Here is the real honest truth! I can control my whole brain except for one part, the amygdala. My amygdala is where all of our feelings hide. When my brain gets scared or mad, emotions pop out. Emotions don't last long and I know my Prefrontal Cortex has a job to do. My Prefrontal Cortex has to find a plan to calm my Amygdala down.



I worked for many hours today putting together a list of strategies for my Prefrontal Cortex to use when my Amygdala flips.

What makes my Amygdala flip?

Sometimes, my Amygdala flips when:

- ★ I hear mean words
- ★ Someone cuts me in line
- ★ I think my things were taken away
- ★ Friends don't want to play with me
- ★ My classwork is challenging
- ★ It is very loud in the class
- ★ I don't get picked in a chance jar
- ★ I think someone is not being fair to me.



What can I do about it when my amygdala flips? First, I need to figure out how mad I am?

ANGER SCALE HOW IT LOOKS & FEELS		
SCALE	I LOOK...	I FEEL...
5		I'm really mad! I scream. I hurt myself or others. I spit. I throw things.
4		I'm angry. I shout. I say things that aren't nice
3		Something bothers me. I frown. I don't want to smile.
2		I'm feeling ok. Not great but all is still good
1		I feel great! I smile, I laugh and I'm relaxed

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Second, I need to find my journal and answer some questions like the ones you see here.

I. What made my Amygdala flip?

II. What happened first, second and third?

III. How am I feeling?

1 2 3 4 5

IV. What strategy will I pick to calm my amygdala?

V. Did it work?

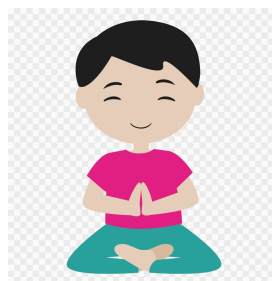
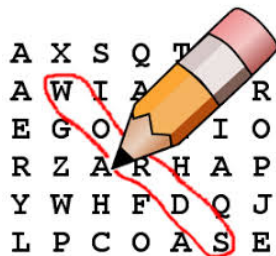
How do you feel?

1 2 3 4 5

Third, I need to pick a strategy. I have worked long hours to come up with how to calm my amygdala. Here are some.

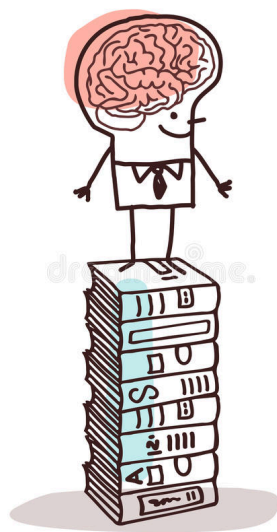
I can:

- ❖ Stop and Breathe
- ❖ Color a Picture
- ❖ Squeeze a Soft Ball
- ❖ Take a Walk
- ❖ Do a Word Search
- ❖ Read a Book
- ❖ Or Do a Yoga Video



The more I practice these strategies, the more control I have over my amygdala. I will learn how to keep my amygdala from feeling so mad that I need to scream, say mean things or even hurt someone.

My goal is to have infinity neurons grow in my brain. I will grow my neurons by practicing these strategies over and over again. I know I can do it!!!!!!



The End