

## **Brain Bites - The Brain, How we change (or Don't)! – February 2008**

### **Category – Neuroplasticity**

#### **The Brain, How We Change (or Don't)**

Do we grow into our brains or do our brains grow with us? Scientists are changing their minds. Past theories of neuroscience said that the adult brain had all the neurons it would ever have and that, for the most part, the existing connections of neurons could not be changed. In other words, old dogs could not learn new tricks.

Current research says that the brain has the ability to change its structure and function in relation to experience. This can be easy or difficult, depending on your approach and motivation. The brain can create new patterns, and the old dog can learn new tricks!

#### **Why is it hard to change?**

According to Jeffrey Schwartz, Research Psychiatrist at the UCLA School of Medicine and author of *The Mind and the Brain*, our working memory is the part of the brain used for learning new activities and it has limited resources. Any activity we do to the point of becoming a routine habit gets pushed to the automatic pilot part of the brain to free up cognitive resources.

Forging new circuits is like cutting through dense new forest rather than following a well-worn trail. We have to go much slower, and put in a lot more effort and attention for every foot we travel. Trying to change a routine behaviour sends out strong messages in our brain that something's not right..."

What will make us go through that effort? Choosing what to pay attention to, adopting a solution focus over a problem focus, building awareness of choice at the moment of decision, taking consistent action and noticing progress are all ways that help adults change. ***Feeling overwhelmed?***

OK, here is another option...SIMPLY DO BRAIN GYM!!!

Brain Gym is a simple, fun and effective tool that clears physical, mental and emotional blocks and positively shift attitudes. Doing Brain Gym gives people tools to change their brain chemistry, and build new neurological pathways, where there was no pathway in existence before. ***Easy–shmeezy!***

Once learned, participants can customize which Brain Gym® movements they use based on their needs and desires. In just minutes, individuals can use Brain Gym® movements strategically to support their own personal learning style and lay the foundation to create positive outcomes. Ultimately they can increase success in the areas of personal and professional development, life balance and learning readiness.

**Participants of Brain Gym® training become self-aware and are empowered to positively impact their own growth and fulfillment!**

Jill Hewlett and Sharon Todd are both Educational Kinesiologists and Licensed Brain Gym Trainers. Their company, Brain Works Global Inc., trains clients on how to maximize their learning potential while working in conjunction with their individual goals.

They provide keynotes, in house training, and sponsored events to a wide range of organizations and the community. For more information go to [www.brainworksglobal.com](http://www.brainworksglobal.com) or call 905.830.6902.