

Mindfulness Research

In Power Your Tribe chapter 4 we talk about mindfulness/meditation/whatever term you prefer practices to help still the mind and enable us to witness ourselves, our thoughts, our world from a new fresh perspective.

For those that are curious, here's the research:

- Researchers from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD sifted through nearly 19,000 meditation studies, and found 47 trials that addressed the above issues and which met their criteria scientifically valid research. Their findings, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, suggest that mindfulness meditation can help ease psychological stresses like anxiety, depression and pain and improve sleep patterns.
- Dr. Andrew Newberg, a Neurotheologist and Director of Research at Philadelphia's Myrna Byrd Center of Integrative Medicine recently studied the brains of spiritual leaders while they meditated or prayed. He concluded that: "The more you do a practice like meditation or prayer, your brain physically gets thicker and it functionally works better."
- An eight-week study conducted by Harvard researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital determined that meditation literally rebuilds the brain's grey matter in just eight weeks. It's the very first study to document that meditation produces physiological changes. Oh, and in that time they found benefit equal to prescription drugs—and without the side effects.
- Sara Lazar's team at Harvard found that Eight weeks of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) *increased* cortical thickness in the hippocampus, which governs learning and memory, and *increases* our prefrontal cortex which affects vision, planning, emotional regulation and more. There were also *decreases* in brain cell volume in the amygdala, which is responsible for fear, anxiety, and stress.
- Yale University, found that mindfulness meditation decreases activity in the default mode network (DMN), the brain network responsible for mind-wandering and self-referential thoughts – a.k.a., "monkey mind." The DMN is "on" or active when we're not thinking about anything in particular, when our minds are just



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wandering from thought to thought. The 60k thoughts per day Dr. Wayne Dyer talked about, that are 90% repetitive!

For anyone that doubts the benefits, I hope the above will help!