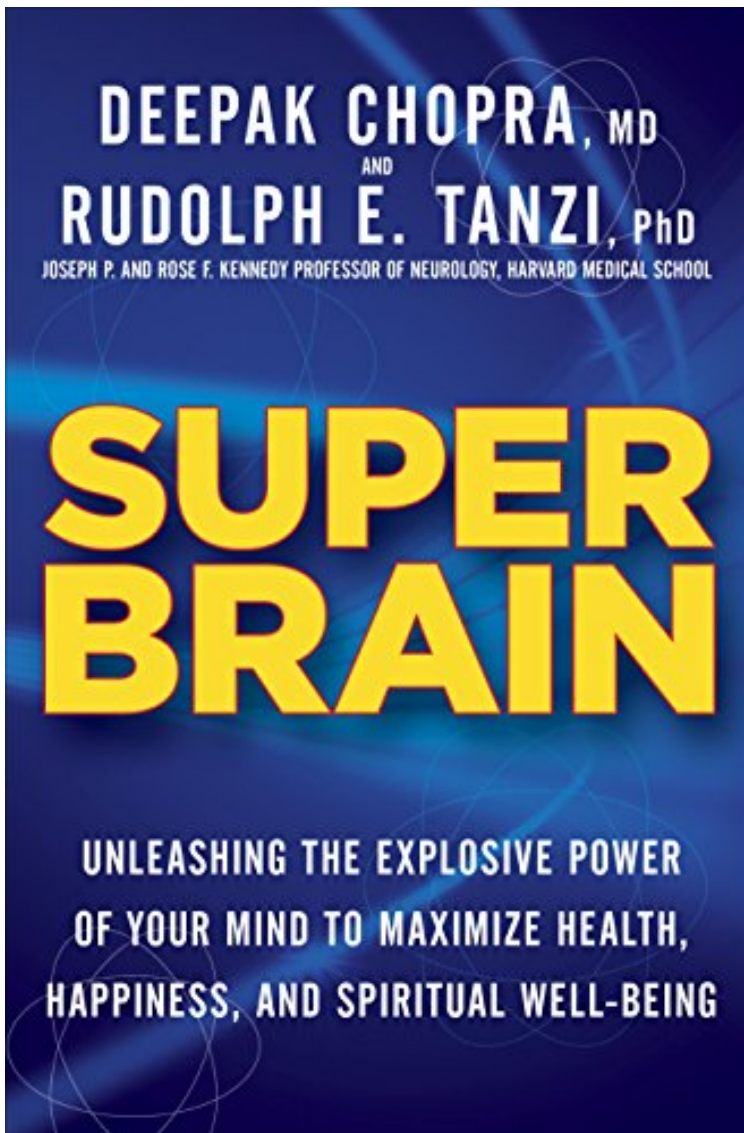


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Super Brain: Unleashing the Explosive Power of Your Mind to Maximize Health, Happiness, and Spiritual Well-Being



*Par Rudolph E. Tanzi, Deepak Chopra
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Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes :
#212952 dans eBooksPubli le: 2012-11-06
Sorti le: 2012-11-06
Format: Ebook
Kindle

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA manual for relating to the brain in a revolutionary new way, Super Brain shows you how to use your brain as a gateway for achieving health, happiness, and spiritual growth. The authors are two pioneers: bestselling author and physician Deepak Chopra and Harvard Medical School professor Rudolph E. Tanzi, one of the world's foremost experts on the causes of Alzheimers. They have merged their

wisdom and expertise for a bold new understanding of the three-pound universe and its untapped potential. In contrast to the baseline brain that fulfills the tasks of everyday life, Chopra and Tanzi propose that, through a persons increased self-awareness and conscious intention, the brain can be taught to reach far beyond its present limitations. We are living in a golden age for brain research, but is this a golden age for your brain? they ask. Super Brain explains how it can be, by combining cutting-edge research and spiritual insights, demolishing the five most widespread myths about the brain that limit your potential, and then showing you methods to:

- Use your brain instead of letting it use you
- Create the ideal lifestyle for a healthy brain
- Reduce the risks of aging
- Promote happiness and well-being through the mind-body connection
- Access the enlightened brain, the gateway to freedom and bliss
- Overcome the most common challenges, such as memory loss, depression, anxiety, and obesity

Your brain is capable of incredible healing and constant reshaping. Through a new relationship with your brain you can transform your life. In Super Brain, Chopra and Tanzi guide you on a fascinating journey that envisions a leap in human evolution. The brain is not just the greatest gift that Nature has given us. Its the gateway to an unlimited future that you can begin to live today.

Extrait A Golden Age for the Brain

What do we really know about the human brain? In the 1970s and 1980s, when the authors gained their training, the honest answer was very little. There was a saying circulating back then: Studying the brain was like putting a stethoscope on the outside of the Astrodome to learn the rules of football. Your brain contains roughly 100 billion nerve cells forming anywhere from a trillion to perhaps even a quadrillion connections called synapses. These connections are in a constant, dynamic state of remodeling in response to the world around you. As a marvel of nature, this one is minuscule and yet stupendous. Everyone stands in awe of the brain, which was once dubbed the three-pound universe. And rightly so. Your brain not only interprets the world, it creates it. Everything you see, hear, touch, taste, and smell would have none of those qualities without the brain. Whatever you experience today your morning coffee, the love you feel for your family, a brilliant idea at work has been specifically customized solely for you. Immediately we confront a crucial issue. If your world is unique and customized for you and you alone, who is behind such remarkable creativity, you or the brain itself? If the answer is you, then the door to greater creativity is flung open. If the answer is your brain, then there may be drastic physical limitations on what you are able to achieve. Maybe your genes are holding you back, or toxic memories, or low self-esteem. Maybe you fall short because of limited expectations that have contracted your awareness, even though you dont see it happening. The facts of the case could easily tell both stories, of unlimited potential or physical limitation. Compared with the past, today science is amassing new facts with astonishing speed. We have entered a golden age of brain research. New breakthroughs emerge every month, but in the midst of such exciting advances, what about the individual, the person who depends upon the brain for everything? Is this a golden age for your brain? We detect an enormous gap between brilliant research and everyday reality. Another medical school saying from the past comes to mind: Each person typically uses only 10 percent of their brain. Speaking literally, thats not true. In a healthy adult, the brains neural networks operate at full capacity all the time. Even the most sophisticated brain scans available would show no detectable difference between Shakespeare writing a soliloquy from Hamlet and an aspiring poet writing his first sonnet. But the physical brain is not nearly the whole story. To create a golden age for your brain, you need to use the gift nature has given you in a new way. Its not the number of neurons or some magic inside your gray matter that makes life more vital, inspiring, and successful. Genes play their part, but your genes, like the rest of the brain, are also dynamic. Every day you step into the invisible firestorm of electrical and chemical activity that is the brains environment. You act as leader, inventor, teacher, and user of your brain, all at once. As leader, you hand out the days orders to your brain. As inventor, you create new pathways and connections inside your brain that didnt exist yesterday. As teacher, you train your brain to learn new skills. As user, you are responsible for keeping your brain in good working order. In these four roles lies the whole difference between the everyday brain lets dub it the baseline brain and what we are calling super brain. The difference is immense. Even though you have not related to the brain by thinking What orders should I give today? or What new pathways do I want to create? thats precisely what you are doing. The customized world that you live in needs a creator. The creator isnt your brain; its you. Super brain stands for a fully aware creator using the brain to maximum advantage. Your brain is endlessly adaptable, and you could be performing your fourfold role leader, inventor, teacher, and user with far more fulfilling results than you now achieve.

Leader: The orders you give are not just command prompts on a computer like delete or scroll to end of page. Those are mechanical commands built into a machine. Your orders are received by a living organism that changes every time you send an instruction. If you think I want the same bacon and

eggs I had yesterday, your brain doesn't change at all. If instead you think "What will I eat for breakfast today?" I want something new, suddenly you are tapping into a reservoir of creativity. Creativity is a living, breathing, ever new inspiration that no computer can match. Why not take full advantage of it? For the brain has the miraculous ability to give more, the more you ask of it. Let's translate this idea into how you relate to your brain now and how you could be relating. Look at the lists below. Which do you identify with?

Baseline Brain I don't ask myself to behave very differently today than I did yesterday. I am a creature of habit. I don't stimulate my mind with new things very often. I like familiarity. It's the most comfortable way to live. If I'm being honest, there's boring repetition at home, work, and in my relationships. Super Brain I look upon every day as a new world. I pay attention not to fall into bad habits, and if one sets in, I can break it fairly easily. I like to improvise. I abhor boredom, which to me means repetition. I gravitate to new things in many areas of my life.

Inventor: Your brain is constantly evolving. This happens individually, which is unique to the brain (and one of its deepest mysteries). The heart and liver that you were born with will be essentially the same organs when you die. Not the brain. It is capable of evolving and improving throughout your lifetime. Invent new things for it to do, and you become the source of new skills. A striking theory goes under the slogan "ten thousand hours," the notion being that you can acquire any expert skill if you apply yourself for that length of time, even skills like painting and music that were once assigned only to the talented. If you've ever seen Cirque du Soleil, you might have assumed that those astonishing acrobats came from circus families or foreign troupes. In fact, every act in Cirque du Soleil, with few exceptions, is taught to ordinary people who come to a special school in Montreal. At one level, your life is a series of skills, beginning with walking, talking, and reading. The mistake we make is to limit these skills. Yet the same sense of balance that allowed you to toddle, walk, run, and ride a bicycle, given ten thousand hours (or less), can allow you to cross a tightrope strung between two skyscrapers. You are asking very little of your brain when you stop asking it to perfect new skills every day.

Which one do you identify with?

Baseline Brain I can't really say that I am growing as much as when I was younger. If I learn a new skill, I take it only so far. I am resistant to change and sometimes feel threatened by it. I don't reach beyond what I am already good at. I spend a good deal of time on passive things like watching television. Super Brain I will keep evolving my whole lifetime. If I learn a new skill, I take it as far as I can. I adapt quickly to change. If I'm not good at something when I first try it, that's okay. I like the challenge. I thrive on activity, with only a modicum of down time.

Teacher: Knowledge is not rooted in facts; it is rooted in curiosity. One inspired teacher can alter a student for life by instilling curiosity. You are in the same position toward your brain, but with one big difference: you are both student and teacher. Instilling curiosity is your responsibility, and when it comes, you are also the one who will feel inspired. No brain was ever inspired, but when you are, you trigger a cascade of reactions that light up the brain, while the incurious brain is basically asleep. (It may also be crumbling; there is evidence that we may prevent symptoms of senility and brain aging by remaining socially engaged and intellectually curious during our entire lifetime.) Like a good teacher, you must monitor errors, encourage strengths, notice when the pupil is ready for new challenges, and so on. Like a bright pupil, you must remain open to the things you don't know, being receptive rather than close-minded.

Which one do you identify with?

Baseline Brain I'm pretty settled in how I approach my life. I am wedded to my beliefs and opinions. I leave it to others to be the experts. I rarely watch educational television or attend public lectures. It's been a while since I felt really inspired. Super Brain I like reinventing myself. I've recently changed a long-held belief or opinion. There's at least one thing I am an expert on. I gravitate toward educational outlets on television or in local colleges. I'm inspired by my life on a day-to-day basis.

User: There's no owner's manual for the brain, but it needs nourishment, repair, and proper management all the same. Certain nutrients are physical; today a fad for brain foods sends people running for certain vitamins and enzymes. But the proper nourishment for the brain is mental as well as physical. Alcohol and tobacco are toxic, and to expose your brain to them is to misuse it. Anger and fear, stress and depression also are a kind of misuse. As we write, a new study has shown that routine daily stress shuts down the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for decision making, correcting errors, and assessing situations. That's why people go crazy in traffic snarls. It's a routine stress, yet the rage, frustration, and helplessness that some drivers feel indicates that the prefrontal cortex has stopped overriding the primal impulses it is responsible for controlling. Time and again we find ourselves coming back to the same theme: Use your brain, don't let your brain use you. Road rage is an example of your brain using you, but so are toxic memories, the wounds of old traumas, bad habits you can't break, and most tragically, out-of-control addictions. This is a vastly important area to be aware of.

Which one do you identify with?

Baseline Brain I have felt out of control recently in at least one area of my life. My stress level

is too high, but I put up with it. I worry about depression or am depressed. My life can go in a direction I don't want it to. My thoughts can be obsessive, scary, or anxious. Super Brain I feel comfortably in control. I actively avoid stressful situations by walking away and letting go. My mood is consistently good. Despite unexpected events, my life is headed in the direction I want it to go. I like the way my mind thinks. Even though your brain doesn't come with an owner's manual, you can use it to follow a path of growth, achievement, personal satisfaction, and new skills. Without realizing it, you are capable of making a quantum leap in how you use your brain. Our final destination is the enlightened brain, which goes beyond the four roles you play. It is a rare kind of relationship, in which you serve as the observer, the silent witness to everything the brain does. Here lies transcendence. When you are able to be the silent witness, the brain's activity doesn't enmesh you. Abiding in complete peace and silent awareness, you find the truth about the eternal questions concerning God, the soul, and life after death. The reason we believe that this aspect of life is real is that when the mind wants to transcend, the brain is ready to follow.

A New Relationship When Albert Einstein died in 1955 at the age of seventy-six, there was tremendous curiosity about the most famous brain of the twentieth century. Assuming that something physical must have created such genius, an autopsy was performed on Einstein's brain. Defying expectations that big thoughts required a big brain, Einstein's brain actually weighed 10 percent less than the average brain. That era was just on the verge of exploring genes, and advanced theories about how new synaptic connections are formed lay decades in the future. Both represent dramatic advances in knowledge. You can't see genes at work, but you can observe neurons growing new axons and dendrites, the threadlike extensions that allow one brain cell to connect with another. It's now known that the brain can form new axons and dendrites up to the last years of life, which gives us tremendous hope for preventing senility, for example, and preserving our mental capacity indefinitely. (So astounding is the brain's ability to make new connections that a fetus on the verge of being born is forming 250,000 new brain cells per minute, leading to millions of new synaptic connections per minute.) Yet in so saying, we are as naive as newspaper reporters waiting eagerly to tell the world that Einstein possessed a freakish brain; we still emphasize the physical. Not enough weight is given to how a person relates to the brain. We feel that without a new relationship, the brain cannot be asked to do new, unexpected things. Consider discouraged children in school. Such students existed in every classroom that all of us attended, usually sitting in the back row. Their behavior follows a sad pattern. First the child attempts to keep up with other children. When these efforts fail, for whatever reason, discouragement sets in. The child stops trying as hard as the children who meet with success and encouragement. The next phase is acting out, making disruptive noises or pranks to attract attention. Every child needs attention, even if it is negative. The disruptions can be aggressive, but eventually the child realizes that nothing good is happening. Acting out leads to disapproval and punishment. So he enters the final phase, which is sullen silence. He makes no more effort to keep up in class. Other children mark him as slow or stupid, an outsider. School has turned into a stifling prison rather than an enriching place. It's not hard to see how this cycle of behavior affects the brain. We now know that babies are born with 90 percent of their brains formed and millions of connections that are surplus. So the first years of life are spent winnowing out the unused connections and growing the ones that will lead to new skills. A discouraged child, we can surmise, aborts this process. Useful skills are not developed, and the parts of the brain that fall into disuse atrophy. Discouragement is holistic, encompassing brain, psyche, emotions, behavior, and opportunities later in life.

Revue de presse "Sensible tips" (Oliver Burkeman Guardian)