

## **Brain Minders Newsletter**

### **The very successful facts to-date**

- Our quantifiable publicity has exceeded over two million dollars.
- We have distributed over 600,000 coloring books to 429 clubs.
- In the past seven and a half years Pilots have reported an average of 1,858 presentations a year to 74,999 children and adults.
- Currently, Pilots have cumulatively totaled a reported 13,874 presentations to 559,823 children and adults.
- The feedback from the children and the parents tell us they are much more mindful of the need for injury prevention.
- Many of the clubs have given this presentation to parent-teacher organizations and adult groups who have given grants or income in support of program.
- Pilot International has not sought strategic alliances until favorable statistics were created for maximum presentation benefit. We have surpassed the desired statistics; desirable financial alliances should be examined and pursued. Licensing and an appeal to medical and safety enterprises is an option for expanding services and public awareness.
- We need to establish that more of our clubs will accept responsibility for reporting their presentations and support of this program.
- Pilot International's signature project has received many awards of recognition, however the greatest reward for many of our clubs have been the schools and organizations requesting presentation dates.

### **Strategic overview - accomplishments to date:**

**360 clubs currently report BrainMinder activities**

**Won Three National Awards for the Program**

**Accumulated approximately \$2 million in newspaper and media coverage – Luce Clipping service provided clipping service for 1.5 years (3 year period)**

**Printed 700,000 books, and 2,500 Storybook/Flipcharts**

**Incorporated new programs into BrainMinders menu** –Community Health Forums are now included under BrainMinders. Additional scripts have been created for BrainMinder Programs and projects and special presentations for teenagers, Baby Boomers and Seniors. Coloring pages are also available on line in Spanish.

**A monthly BrainMinders newsletter is published in Constant Contact**

**Introduce New PI Safety Tips Pilot Club Calendar contest this year.**

**Website is a rich resource for downloadable materials: scripts, PSAs, forms, posters, presentations, and artwork for all age groups.**

## **2010 BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK**

Brain Awareness Week (BAW) is next month! I hope you will participate at your own school or in your neighborhood. For more information about BAW, please visit the Dana Alliance and Society for Neuroscience web sites at:

<http://www.dana.org/brainweek/> and <http://www.sfn.org/BAW/>

### **From Eric Chudler's Neuroscience for Kids - SENSORY IDIOMS**

An idiom is an expression or saying that becomes part of popular culture.

Idioms often cannot be understood from the individual words that make up the expression. For example, the expression "I heard it through the grapevine" does not mean "I heard something by listening to a plant that produces grapes." Rather, it means that something was heard through a network of people. English is filled with idioms that spice up language.

Here are some idioms that focus on the senses:

- A. "I'm all ears" means to pay attention.
- B. "Apple of my eye" means that something is greatly valued. This saying may have its origins in the thought that the pupil of the eye is shaped like an apple.
- C. "Blind as a bat" means that someone cannot see. This saying has been around since the 1500s, but it is based on the incorrect assumption that bats are blind. Actually, bats have good vision.
- D. "Come up smelling like roses" means that a bad situation turned out fine.
- E. "Having cold feet" means that someone has lost confidence or is afraid of doing something. This expression has been around since the 1800s and may come from the observation of soldiers running away from battle.
- F. "Eyes in the back of the head" means that someone can see what is happening even without looking.
- G. "In one ear and out the other" means that someone is not paying attention. Quintilian, a Roman orator in the first century A.D., is credited with coining this expression. In the 13th century, English poet Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a variation of the original Latin phrase.
- H. "More than meets the eye" means that there is a hidden meaning. This saying was first used in the 1800s by the British.
- I. "On the tip of your tongue" means that something is temporarily forgotten and almost remembered. This expression was first used by Daniel Defoe in his book, "Moll Flanders."

J. "Play it by ear" means to do something without much planning.

Reference: Terban, M., Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms, New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1996

#### 8. MEDIA ALERT

A. "Overcoming Phobias" by Lev Grossman (Time magazine, January 11, 2010).

B. "Workouts for Your Brain" by Bonnie Rochman (Time magazine, January 18, 2010) discusses the controversies about cognitive fitness products. Also, the cover story in this issue is titled "Why Your DNA Isn't Your Destiny" by John Cloud.

C. Charlie Rose Brain Series at:

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/collection/10702>

D. The cover of the Winter 2010 issue of The American Scholar magazine is "Our Mind-Boggling Brain." This magazine features the article "My Brain on My Mind" by Priscilla Long.

E. "'Impossible'" Colors: See Hues That Can't Exist" by Vincent A. Billock and Brian H. Tsou (Scientific American, February, 2010).

F. Public evening conference on "Human Locomotion Sciences, Memory and Cognitive Performance", Friday, March 19, 2010, 8:45 pm, Castagnaro Civic Hall, Castagnaro, Italy. This conference will discuss how exercise may reduce the risk of age-related cognitive decline.

G. "The Most Dangerous Game" is the cover story of the February 8, 2010 issue of Time magazine. This issue contains articles that discuss brain and spinal cord injuries suffered by football players.

H. "The Depressing News about Antidepressants" is the cover story of the February 8, 2010 issue of Newsweek magazine.

#### **From Steve Gilman's Brain Power Newsletter**

##### ***Some Good Effects of Stress?***

Interestingly, a little stress may improve attention and memory in the short term. This makes sense from an evolutionary viewpoint. When faced with real physical threats we need to have a heightened awareness and ability to deal with the crisis.

However, most of us in the modern world rarely face real and immediate physical threats, yet we still have the stress response. In fact, we normally have it as a reaction to nothing but our own thoughts. Unfortunately, unlike animals (or our human ancestors) which release the stress and the hormones they create by running away or taking other actions, our stress tends to remain for hours at a time, sometimes getting worse as we have more anxiety-causing thoughts.

The result? Possibly brain damage, the research suggests. Cortisol and other adrenal steroid hormones are released during the stress response, and if the exposure is repeated and for long periods of time,

these substances can damage the brain. They can block the formation of new neurons in the hippocampus, preventing the storing of new memories. Some recent research suggest that chronic stress can lead indirectly to cell death as well.

This is especially disturbing because the damage may reduce our ability to creatively solve our problems or even make the changes necessary to reduce the stress which is causing the damage in the first place. In other words, it can become downward spiral of reduced brain function which reduces one's ability to deal with the causes, which then allows for more of the same. It appears that our modern stress does far more harm than good, both to the brain and the rest of the body.

### ***Reducing the Effects of Stress***

How do you best reduce or prevent chronic stress? There are a number of ways that have been covered in the Brainpower Newsletter and on this website. Meditation is very helpful for some people. The use of relaxing brainwave entrainment CDs helps as well. Regular exercise, humor and positive social interaction all seem to work for many people. Alcohol and other drugs may provide temporary relief, but generally cause more damage than they can prevent.

Of course, removing the causes of stress may seem like a natural solution, but this can be a tricky one. Often this approach becomes a mere avoidance of things and situations which cause us fear or discomfort. This can limit your opportunities in life and stunt your growth as a person. In fact, responding to fear by avoiding the people and situations which cause it may strengthen the fearful response, causing more anxiety.

This is where a bit of self awareness and a different perspective may be necessary. If we watch ourselves closely, we can see that with the exception of fear and stress related to immediate threats, like an animal attack, our response is not primarily to the event itself, but to our own thoughts. In other words, the causes are not out there, but in our own minds. If we see it from this perspective, then we can start to resolve the causes without avoidance of the things and situations we imagine to be the root of the problem. This is a much healthier approach.

I have written on this before, especially on the problem of identifying with one's anxious or fearful thoughts. The short lesson: Your thoughts are not you, and you do not have to take their advice, nor do you have to believe their demands. I will write on this topic again both on this website and others, but for now I will leave you with a quote:

*Stress exists because we insist.* - Guy Finley

### ***This Week's Quotes***

- The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity. - *Albert Einstein*

- A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices. -  
*William James*

### **Practice Your Creativity**

Start looking for new ways to do things. Drive a different route to work, or approach a problem at home from a new perspective. The simplest way to develop the power of your creative mind is to exercise it. Train your mind to look for the creative or different angle on things. Practice finding creative solutions to problems as you are driving around or sitting in a waiting room. Creativity gives power to your thinking.