

Inspired Life Formula with Nina Lockwood

Module 6 Find Your Flow

Exercise 3 Train Your Brain

This is Nina Lockwood and welcome to exercise 3 Train Your Brain for Module 6 of the Inspired Life Formula.

In module 6 we've looked at several components of being in flow. We started out with identifying the kind of perspective that naturally sets the stage for flow to appear in your life. We looked at two different contexts in which flow can be present: one that occurs when you're participating in an event-specific situation like sports and the second in which your entire life is characterized by flow. You've completed two exercises to learn your dominant mode of perceiving your world as well as the dominant side of your brain that processes your perceptions. In exercise 2 you learned techniques to expand your perceptual skills, and in exercise 3, we'll review how each side of the brain processes information and how you can consciously practice activities that will create balance between the right and left hemispheres of your brain.

There are certain activities that are obviously handled better by one side of the brain than the other (research, for example, requires left brain skills such as logic, analysis and sequential reasoning) but as we make the effort to become more conscious, we have the opportunity to incorporate not only an awareness of the parts of an experience but the experience as a whole.

What's the benefit of a balanced brain? I mentioned earlier that as our brains are exposed to a larger quantity of information that's of a higher quality and being interpreted by both sides of the brain, brain plasticity is increased so more neural pathways are created, more pattern recognition is possible, more understanding is created. Remember, how well your brain functions affects every aspect of your life - your thoughts, your behaviors, your personality, your ability to fully participate in life, so by having a

balanced brain you're more likely to live up to your highest potential because your brain will be wired for optimal, integrated functioning. Second, you'll have an increased ability to perceive your physical reality and see the meaning in what's going on and that will make you more effective, more successful and happier. Third, you can have brain-body experience of deep connection to all of life so that you know not only that all of life is connected, but that you are a part of that connection, that's the spiritual component. Fourth, you have greater access to your intuition and your inner guidance that we talked about in earlier modules. So your inner life and your outer life reap the benefits.

From the earlier assessment you discovered whether you're predominantly right or left brain dominant. That means that sensory data goes into your brain and is interpreted predominantly in one way or another. It's processed and stored into distinct ways. Now, in real life no one is 100% one sided, and many of you will recognize that you're able to switch from one side to the other when needed. Let's just spend a little bit of time talking about the characteristics of both sides before giving you some ways to integrate them.

Here are some of the characteristics of the left brain: it processes information using symbols: words, language, numbers, abstract ideas. It's concerned with analysis, logic, measurement, comparison, judgment. It likes step by step procedures, staying inside the proverbial box, predictability, rules - it deals with figuring out how things are put together and interprets the world first and foremost through language. There is a strict sense of time. The right side of the brain is more holistic - it intuits or sees the whole picture all at once and the sense of time is more kairós than chronos. Recognition happens first through image recognition rather than words. The right brain pays attention to meaning, a gut sense of things, and processes the world first as a sensory experience - through sensations, feelings, movement so language is not the dominant interpreter. Information is stored simultaneously. You all know someone who is a creative type who isn't good with language but is wonderful with ideas, images, feeling states. So you could say left brain thinking is linear, language based and concerned with the parts while right brain thinking is nonlinear, image-based and concerned with the whole, or the big picture.

I'm going to give you two exercises to encourage both sides of your brain to learn to dance more gracefully with one another. If you want to develop the right side of your brain, try the following:

1. Do a single activity (for instance, clean your house, make dinner, or organize your desk or room) without looking at the time until you're finished. Once you've tried that, try spending an entire morning or afternoon (you can set your watch or an alarm) without having access to a watch or a clock. This might be more challenging than you would imagine, and it may make you feel somewhat uncomfortable, especially if the activity is not one you particularly love. Here's another exercise:
2. Write or draw with your left hand. This is something you experimented with in the first modules, so try taking it to another level by doing more of it. Ask yourself a question, such as how you feel about a certain subject, or a person and notice what comes through your hand. And if you draw a picture, suspend any judgment of how good it may or may not look, and just observe, as best you can, what happens.

Now, to practice some left brain skills, try the following:

1. Take a skill or an activity that you do that has become automatic - that you never stop to think about how you do it - maybe it's riding a bicycle or skiing down a mountain - and create a set of step by step instructions.
2. The second exercise you can try is to read or listen to a short story and afterwards, write down all the details so that you can then create an outline of the general overview and important points . Again, these exercises may make you uncomfortable or just might make you laugh at how comfortable you may be in living on one side of the brain or the other.

These are all activities that separate out one activity and do it from a different perspective, but there are also other ways to enable your brain to become more integrated. They include meditation, listening to music, engaging with art, either through participation or appreciation, or doing sports or exercise like yoga. In each of these cases, you are allowing your brain to process information that is both symbolic and detailed with nonverbal, global meaning.

It's my hope that as you experiment with these exercises you expand your understanding of how your thoughts and feelings affect what you perceive in your outer world. Once you become aware of this, you can intentionally choose what you want and begin to notice how the Universe supports and provides for you.