

9 Key Strategies to Save Your Brain

Always remember your mind is a terrible thing to waste. Please continue to read to find tips on training your brain on different techniques.

Recently I was privileged to receive an invitation from Joel Osteen to attend his church in Houston. He had used my Eat, Drink and Be Healthy program to teach for three Sunday mornings on health. The church is phenomenal.

It's in the old Compaq Center basketball arena. I spoke there twice in the 1990s on the Success Circuit. Many of you have been with me so long that you may have attended that event or one similar. It was at those events where I had the privilege to share the platform with George Bush Sr., Barbara Bush, Colin Powell, Bill Cosby and Larry King, to name a few. It was great to see the renovation and how beautiful the facility had become.

I met Joel and Victoria when they walked into the service. The first words out of Joel's mouth to me were, "I love your stuff," speaking of my books and CDs. My first words to him were, "I love your stuff too." Needless to say, we really hit it off. I was able to spend quite a bit of time with him after the service.

Interestingly enough, a group of Christian reporters were there from Germany. They were shocked when I started speaking German to them. Many of you may not know it, but my first language is German. The Germans wanted what Joel had. They wanted the joy of the Lord. During the television interview they had with him, they were so enamored with the power, joy and love of God that flows so freely through him.

Many of you are probably thinking, *Well, that's great! But*

what does that have to do with killing your brain? I'm glad you asked. Our memory, whether we are speaking a foreign language, remembering Scripture or remembering where we placed our car keys, is critical to maintain a healthy, happy, productive life.

Until recently, the standard medical belief was that we were born with a certain number of brain cells that would slowly die off and never be replaced, resulting in a gradual mental decline usually ending in senility. In fact, "benign forgetfulness of old age" remains a formal diagnosis.

Let me tell you: You can forget all of that. Advances in brain imaging genetics and neuroscience now show that our body continues to create new brain cells throughout life. Also, the neurons in our brains continue to change, develop and forge new connections even as we age. We actually have physical changes in our brain every time we learn something new.

This evoking adaptability is called *neuroplasticity*. Some scientists believe that dementia and Alzheimer's occurs when the brain loses this ability to grow and change. I think other causes include aluminum, lead and aspartame (NutraSweet) poisoning. In fact, I wrote an excellent book entitled *Maximum Memory*. That book is still available through my office (800-726-1834).

The sad reality of Alzheimer's is that 50 percent of all baby boomers will develop the disease. I am so glad that is not going to happen to any of you who read my newsletters and follow some simple advice.

Probably the biggest falsehood, based on all this new information, is that growing old has to lead to the deterioration of mental ability. Here are some great tips, supplements and neural exercises that I have used for years to keep my brain and memory sharp.

4 Quick Action Items

1. **Exercise your brain.** The brain is similar to your muscles. If you don't use it, you lose it. Exercise your brain daily. Crossword puzzles are a great brain exercise. But remember, crossword puzzles and number puzzles have to challenge you. They can't be simple. Go through old photo albums on a regular basis. Remember your friends and vacations long forgotten. Force your brain to recall positive, happy thoughts from your childhood.
2. **Do activities that involve multiple senses.** These can include learning dance steps or a new form of aerobics, or for those of you who are capable or inclined, karate. Also excellent is learning to play a guitar or keyboard. Remember, any time you challenge your brain, it renews itself, forming new dendrites and synapses. That, in turn, prompts the brain to produce growth molecules. One quick tip: Focus on what you are doing. Try not to multitask as much. Focus, focus, focus. Let me give you an example. I have four children, plus a lot of employees. When I write a newsletter, I go to the back room of my office and close the door. I don't bring my phone, and I don't take calls unless it is an emergency. Remember, I am 57 years old, and I feel great. My mental acuity is as good as ever.
3. **Stay social; don't be a hermit.** Older adults who stay social after retirement score much better on IQ tests. When you socialize, it requires memory, logical function, interactive skills, communication, reasoning and thinking. Keeping active is so important.
4. **Eat right.** You knew I would get to this sooner or later.

9 Key Strategies

1. **Take cod blue ice cod liver oil every day.** Take one to two teaspoons daily. The brain has to have omega-3 fat to function. The brand that we carry and I personally take is simply the best. The right kind of omega-3 fat also helps to

burn body fat, fight depression (actually better than Prozac), increase IQ scores in children and adults, reduce inflammation and relieve joint pain. This list goes on and on. Take cod liver oil daily.

By the way, postpartum depression in most cases is caused by a lack of omega-3 fat in the brain of the mother. During the last trimester of pregnancy, the fetus requires large amounts of omega-3 for proper brain development. If the mother isn't taking an omega-3 supplement (like cod liver oil), the fetus literally sucks the omega-3 from the mothers' brain. This can cause severe mood swings and postpartum depression.

2. Avoid alcohol. It kills brain cells. Enough said!

3. Avoid aspartame. It kills brain cells too. Enough said. Be sure to read my blog post on aspartame.

4. Avoid MSG. It kills brain cells. Enough said. See Sharon's *Healthy Country Cooking Cookbook* for healthy alternatives.

5. Avoid hydrogenated oils and trans fats. They plug up the arteries and reduce oxygen flow to the brain, which kills brain cells.

6. Don't use aluminum anything. Here is what I think happens with aluminum. Aluminum, lead and mercury have the ability to pass through the blood brain barrier. They get into the brain. Aluminum, lead and mercury are incredibly toxic and also conduct electricity. The brain and our bodies are both based on bioelectrical development. Our brain literally sends a bioelectrical charge through our spine and then our nerves for us to move our hand. Thoughts are real things that can be measured. When we put metals in our brain that conduct electricity, they have to affect neurological functions in a very negative way. The brain literally short-circuits. It can no longer function the way God made it. Hence, we are diagnosed with Alzheimer's or senile dementia. Other supplements that are critical are B vitamins, especially B-12,

and folic acid. My B vitamins are the best. Also, vitamin E (mixed tocopherol) is important for blood flow. Remember to eat wild salmon (not farm raised). And use olive oil in cooking. Follow the recipes in my wife's two cookbooks, *Maximum Energy Cookbook* and *Healthy Country Cooking*.

7. Exercise is always critical. It increases blood flow to the brain. Walking with a good pair of shoes or using an elliptical running machine are great blood-pumping exercises. In one American Academy of Neurology study, for every extra mile a woman walked per week, her risk of cognitive decline dropped by 13 percent. In a study of more than 1,700 seniors, those who exercised three or more times a week had the lowest risk of Alzheimer's, according to a January 2006 study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

8. Manage your stress. Stress increases cortisol, a stress hormone. Cortisol kills brain cells. Don't get mad. Be happy. Rejoice in all things. Don't let the little things bug you. Remember, stress erodes the brain. Researchers have found that one of the contributions to dementia is chronic stress. (Just a side note: Coffee also elevates cortisol.)

9. Get eight to 10 hours of sleep a night. Before Thomas Edison developed the light bulb, people slept an average of 10 hours a night. A lack of sleep has been shown clinically to reduce neural plasticity. The brain can't grow new cells and rebuild itself. Remember, on the seventh day, even God rested.

Dr. Ted Broer, a university-trained biochemist, exercise physiologist and licensed nutritionist, nearly died of heart disease at the age of 27. He has spent nearly two decades studying the relationships between nutrition, exercise, disease and premature death.

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