



[Change Your Brain, Change Your Body: Use Your Brain to Get and Keep the Body You Have Always Wanted](#) (affiliate) by Daniel G. Amen, M.D.

[ChiroSummary](#) by Alexander Rinehart, DC, CCN

10% of all Proceeds Benefit the [Foundation for Chiropractic Progress](#)

Thanks for Supporting Your Profession!

Dr. Daniel Amen takes the reader through a journey of biofeedback techniques, brain imaging, and nutritional therapies that have been shown to support brain health and related disorders.

The crux of Dr. Amen's argument? *Better health begins with the brain.*

He describes how small stresses will and do have an effect on the brain over time. *Above Down, Inside Out.* Many of the stresses are caused by poor behavior, mediated by you guessed it, the brain.

Do you have patients living off of fast food, diet soda, and caffeine? Do you communicate that stress is accumulating physically on the brain.

If you do not measure it, you do not know it's there says Dr. Amen, and on that note, you do not know if you have fixed it either.

Now I do not expect chiropractors to start performing brain scans in their offices like Dr. Amen, but the principles are important. *There is no one-size-fits-all prescription that fits each practice member's unique needs.*

Just as when you are looking at coaching programs for your practice, you want to align with a coaching style that matches YOUR wants and needs, and YOUR practice style. Cookie cutter programs can be attractive to students trying to find themselves after school, but many docs do not wish to be molded that way.

There's no one prescription to guarantee practice success, and we shouldn't expect the same for the body.

The prescription depends on one's goals. It's difficult to convince some individuals that periodic chiropractic maintenance care is healthy for the body, when their idea of a chiropractor is just someone who treats back pain.

If you keep losing practice members because of these types of conversations, look to how you're attracting and communicating practice members into your office from the moment they see your office, your ads, pick up and call you on the phone, and first step in to the office. What is their experience from *their* point of view?

Are you giving lectures so that people who do "get it" can find you? What questions are you asking your patient during the initial consultation? Do they reflect your practice philosophy? Do you and your staff have your spines adjusted or your muscles treated in line with your philosophical views?

Some chiropractors may just want to treat back pain and related conditions. Some docs want to be wellness coaches and motivators.

The same principles apply to all practitioners as we all must yield questions such as "Once I start seeing a chiropractor, do I always have to come back?" or "Do I have to be adjusted, maybe just not my neck?"

Pay careful attention to the messages you send your patients with the education material on your walls, the way staff members answer the phones, and the way you set goals and measure results. Congruency is key!

Physical, chemical, emotional and environmental stresses all compound in unique ways to affect overall health including brain health. Your care plans should be congruent with your philosophy and be tailored to the uniqueness of the practice member in front of you.

The Mind-Body Link

Dr. Amen explains that issues such as weight loss are not just issues of calories in or calories out, but deal inseparably with healthy brain function - Willpower, discipline, procrastination and cravings are all rooted in the brain. These views are supported with recent work by Tim Ferriss' [The Four Hour Body](#) and Gary Taubes' [Good Calories, Bad Calories](#), and Taubes' latest, [Why We Get Fat](#) (affiliate links).

If you're stressed because of working hard at your practice...maybe it's time to take a step back and ask yourself if you are even working IN your practice or ON your practice. If we teach wellness and prevention to our practice members? Are we practicing what we preach with the health of our businesses?

Why do we put up with the stresses of insurance, of difficult patients, of documentation requirements, tax laws, and licensing requirements? In case you forgot - We put up with it *to have the **unique privilege of conducting a doctor-patient encounter in line with our Chiropractic Truth, in a marketplace with an incredibly rising demand for our services.***

Baby-boomers are knocking - will you answer?

Work Stress and Life Balance

Chiropractic is incredibly rewarding and inspiring work...if you're stressed, it's time to fix it now.

If you're stressed, it's only a matter of time before it catches up to you, and looking to the brain, and understanding your triggers, can be a great place to start.

Your brain is the cornerstone of the physical, chemical, and psychological YOU. The Mind-Body connection is inseparable.

Dr. Amen outlines 10 principles to remember about the brain. His book elaborates in detail on every point. Here I will only provide an overview and how the ideas relate to chiropractic practice and a chiropractic lifestyle.

1. The brain is involved in everything.

As such, every time you become stressed, every object you put in your mouth, the people you surround yourself with, the media you listen to, all affect the brain. Junk in, junk out.

In fact Bruce Lipton, PhD has extended the idea of the "brain" to include the cell membranes surrounding every cell in our body. The cell constantly monitors its surroundings, reading signals from the "outside".

Healthy signals (diet, environment, thoughts, exercise)--> Healthy membranes--> healthy functioning--> healthy behaviors --> healthy RESULTS.

A cell "remembers" and tries to adapt itself to the signals being transmitted to it, so you want to constantly be giving your cells (and your brain) positive reinforcement throughout the day!

The body knows how to produce health if given the right raw materials to do so.

2. When the brain is working well, so is the body.

It's important to identify triggers to poor brain function, understand its needs and limitations. Improve your diet, exercise and lifestyle.

According to BJ Fogg, expert on Persuasion from Stanford University, bringing about a lifestyle change in someone is about **identifying the 1-2 problem areas** and **adding positive triggers in your environment** to make one's behaviors and choices a habit once and for all. Willpower, as it stands, is an exhaustible resource.

Start ridiculously small if that's what you need to do to be *absolutely* sure that there is no way you can make that change in your life. Research suggests that small victories build momentum toward larger wins.

Change your environment-->alter the stream of environmental triggers-->alter your thoughts--> alter your body-->Alter your LIFE.

In short - It is all about *prevention* and Chiropractors know a thing or two about that!

Learn to ask "Why?". "Why is my brain foggy today?", "Why did I let myself eat that?", "Why did I have that extra drink at the party last night?. Identify the triggers and establish positive triggers like a phone reminder or something as simple as a post-it note, or a string around the finger to remind you at the point of decision.

Go to parties with a plan on what you're going to eat. Go to the grocery store with a plan, have a grocery list, have recipes and fall-back plans. It doesn't have to be a mind-numbing task of keeping track of every expense, just change the upstream funnels to your everyday experience to make behavioral choices easier.

Plan for failure. Know that you're going to fall off the wagon, and create systems to bump you back into gear when that time comes. Hungry in the car? Why not have a bag of nuts or meal replacement bar as a safety valve.

Going out to eat? Why not look at the menu online before leaving and decide what you're going to have before the hunger pangs kick in and lead you down the slippery slope of impulse eating.

Or more importantly, if you find a recurring problem in your practice, *spend an hour of creative energy to create a system or train a staff person on how to minimize the problem in the first place*. Alter the phone script, reserve a time for all deposits to be made and checks to be written, emails to be read and responses to be sent. Organize, and when that stops working, reorganize.

When you scatter these activities throughout the day, you lose focus and productivity worsens. Work smart, not hard! When you organize your life in the language of the brain, you get the results you were looking for.

3. The brain is the most complex organ in the Universe.

The more we learn about the brain, the more questions we are left with. What we know is that the brain is like an antenna, receiving and emitting frequencies that others perceive as behavior, mood and consciousness. We know that meditation changes the frequency, and we know that differing states of consciousness are like differing radio stations. What's your frequency for practice success? Are you tuned into \$50,000 a year? \$100,000 a year? or \$500,000+ a year?

Intuitively we understand the complexity of the brain. Do you know of certain people, that immediately upon entering a room, will change the mood for the better? How about the opposite, do you know any Debbie-downers who always have something negative to say? Who would you rather surround yourself? Who do you currently find around you...?

Protect your energy. It's a vital resource. Stay away from people and things that drain you of it...surround yourself by those who revitalize you. Providing a chiropractic adjustment with present-time-consciousness is a great way to transfer energy between persons. As Reggie Gold asserts, an adjustment isn't given to someone, it's experienced *with* someone.

Do you feel energized after a shift or do you feel drained? If drained, you have some work to do in this department. Get to it!

4. The brain is vulnerable, but highly protected by the body.

Whether you look at the blood-brain-barrier or the skull itself. The brain is protected at all costs. Drink too much alcohol, the brain causes you to pass out. Not enough oxygen? Another reason you'll pass out. These are *healthy* responses by the body to protect the brain.

Dr. Amen tells us to make sure we're well-hydrated and to pay attention to seemingly minor brain trauma like drinking alcohol every night, or participation in sports like boxing and football.

Even the most mild of car accidents can cause behavioral and functional problems underneath the surface. Chiropractors know this, but don't always extend that advice into what we give our bodies.

Counsel your patients accordingly. Be careful of how quickly you let injured athletes back on to the field. Many great athletes' careers have been ended too early because of rushing back on to the field.

Protect your brain at all costs. What are you feeding your brain?

5. Stress Drains the Brain.

Stress is pandemic in industrialized countries and it's unfortunate because it's preventable and manageable.

We have created work schedules that go against the grain of human physiology. We stay in poor relationships. We stay in unfulfilling jobs and careers.

Sometimes an extra \$3-5,000 in salary is just not worth the stress of a long commute, or the time taken away from family and friends. Look to simplify your life. No one lies on their deathbed wishing they had made just an extra \$3000-5000 a year.

Do you feel impending burnout from your practice? Time to change it up. Head to a seminar to reinvigorate your Chiropractic spirit. Remodel the office, change your treatment tables around. Take the staff out for dinner, take them to a them park. Go camping. Something to shift the positive, forward-moving energy in to your life.

Humans are inherently creative. When we get stuck in routine and draining schedules, we lose this vital aspect of human nature. Embrace it.

6. The Brain is Changeable -

The science of brain plasticity is still emerging, but the insights are remarkable. Before his passing, Christopher Reeves had slowly been regaining motor function after being paralyzed for years.

Chiropractor Joe Dispenza is a tremendous resource on how to [Evolve Your Brain](#) (affiliate). Dr. Dispenza shows how the brain physically changes itself. He shows how we become addicted to emotions, and neurons that fire together, synapse together and create patterns of mood and behavior.

Just as the cells replace themselves over 3-6 months, the brain can remodel itself as well, if fed the right thoughts - negative thoughts will literally wither away.

Whether you believe in [The Secret](#) (affiliate), or are just beginning to understand [The Power Behind Memes](#). You understand the mysterious ways in which the brain brings emotions and events into our lives.

7. Even Low-Level Stress Can Damage the Brain:

Chiropractic philosophy has established this tenet for over 115 years with the idea of the subluxation.

While many definitions of subluxation have been argued over in our profession since its infancy, my definition of a subluxation is: ***any interference (physical, chemical, psychological) to the body's innate ability to express health.***

One of the central tenets of interference is the concept of organ reserve.

Your body is like a triage unit. Focusing on acute trauma foremost, and on chronic, smoldering conditions secondarily. When your body is overloaded with toxins, negative thoughts, and cumulative physical and chemical trauma, the body is less concerned with health producing activities such as scavenging free radicals and rogue cancer cells, balancing blood sugar, or clearing build-up from arteries.

Whether it's small inadequacies in spinal motion, or small stresses to the digestive system like an occasional candy bar or alcoholic drink, these decisions will have an effect on the body. At the very least, these actions increase the *probability* of something interfering with the body's expression of health.

One overlooked area that some segments of chiropractors deal with directly is emotional stress and negative thinking.

Dr. Amen tells us that it's been proven that *negative thinking lowers brain activity, increases heart rate, increased blood pressure, and can have a debilitating influence on willpower to achieve health goals.*

Systematically replace these emotions with *gratitude* and foster relationships in your life. Get a good night sleep. These are all positive influences that can help stem the tide of chronic disease at its roots.

8. Use Scans as a Diagnostic Tool for Hidden Damage:

Chiropractors know that a practice member can seem perfectly healthy on the surface. Skinny diabetics exist. Very active people with no flexibility exist. Calm people can be stressed on the inside.

Dr. Gentempo and Dr. Christopher Kent have worked for years putting together diagnostic tools to help chiropractors measure the influence they are having on the nervous system and gathering evidence that supports research models congruent with holistic healthcare.

Dr. Dane Donohue's [8 Weeks to Wellness](#), along with Dr. James Chestnut's [Eat Well, Move Well, Think Well](#), and of course Dr. Gentempo and Dr. Kent's [Creating Wellness](#) programs all have introduced *algorithmic* evaluation of patients that involves multiple therapies and a score-based system to measure health.

You don't have to conduct brain scans in your office to make evidence-based assumptions that some harm can be transferred to the brain from the variety of stressors in our practice member's lives.

Look into new technologies like heart rate variability that give direct indication of your body's ability to handle stress at any given moment.

Sometimes practice members need to see their health potential shown tangibly on a graph or a scale in order to become motivated for lifestyle change.

One can do all of the right things, and still be diagnosed with cancer. One can do all of the wrong things and still live well into their 90's. Chiropractor and fitness legend Jack LaLanne passed away at the ripe age of 96. In his 90's, he was healthier than the majority of Americans in their 40's and 50's today.

These are exceptions to the rule. Learn to think in terms of *probability*. Think to yourself:

What is the **probability** that a **negative** consequence will come about because of this action?

Or better yet:

What is the **probability** that a **POSITIVE** consequence will come about because of this action?

Someone with a higher wellness score has a greater *probability* of expressing health. If you do not measure it, you do not know.

9. One Prescription Does Not Fit All.

Multi-dimensional problems require multi-dimensional solutions.

Do not let your ego sit in the way of delivering the multi-disciplinary care that practice members desire. Healthcare "teams" are becoming more and more popular (and necessary) and so it might be useful to enlist a massage therapist, an acupuncturist, and other health professionals such as psychotherapists in your practice.

DD talked about Trauma, Toxins and Autosuggestion for a reason.

He knew intuitively that problems of the body were multi-dimensional in their very nature. Sometimes a little bit of multiple therapies working together can synergize into something greater than a single focus on one modality.

10. You Can Change the Brain and Body -

I highly recommend looking into some of the work of our colleague, Joe Dispenza, D.C. or other practitioners like Sue Morter, D.C. who work with patients to overcome dysfunctional thoughts or to release emotional baggage.

Become interested in Quantum Physics while other scientists just try to keep their contradictions under the rug.

1. set positive and realistic goals and expectations for your patients
2. Watch your language. Use positive psychology to your advantage.

Understand that we influence one another. One negative staff member in your practice can be a *virus*.

Cut out viruses like you would cancer, remove it and create systems and choices that keep it from coming back.

Summary

- We are all connected amongst our patterns of brain frequency. Some chiropractors speak about "tone" and regaining harmonic balance in the body. Asking for staff members to start the day with a "positive share" or constantly reminding yourself and your staff members of your company's mission and vision are important. Try them out and see what they can do for your practice and the energy experienced every day.
- In quantum physics, we know that even the slightest differences in the initial circumstances or intent of an undertaking can make huge and dramatic differences in the end results. Like a butterfly that flaps its wings and causes a hurricane, pay very close attention to how small actions can influence huge results.
- Dr. Patrick Gentempo has a motivated proponent of developing and fostering a clarity of purpose. Whether you are a fan of the Chiropractic Leadership Alliance's technologies or not, take Gentempo's philosophical advice to heart and spend considerable time on your purpose and vision. An underlying purpose will guide difficult decisions into black and white criteria that helps the brain become decisive. Know where you want to end up and you will make the right choices to get there!
- Remember from the work of Joseph Murphy and Dr. Bruce Lipton that every thought is imprinted on our subconscious brain. The subconscious brain is something not talked about in any detail by Dr. Amen, but it is not to be overlooked.

Up to 95% of behavior is now thought to be rooted in subconscious patterning that we have little control over. Worse yet, much of this patterning is developed in the first 5-6 years of life.

*What we do have control over is the 5% of conscious choice that determines the people, places, and things we surround ourselves with and the thoughts and perceptions we **choose** to embrace.*

Topics for Further Study:

Dr. Amen goes into further detail about these topics and I invite you to research them for yourselves and how they can fit into your practice style. I've added a few of my own. This list is by no means not exhaustive, but a great place to start.

- GABA/Glutamate balance
- Endorphins
- Proprioceptor/Nociceptor balance
- Dopamine/Serotonin balance
- Essential Oils like lavender
- Leptin Resistance
- Hippocampus/Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal-Axis and links with sex hormones, thyroid dysfunction
- Adaptogenic Herbs like Ashwagandha
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- L-Tryptophan/L-Theanine

- Vitamin D, Coenzyme Q10, Alpha-Lipoic Acid
- Green tea and its extracts
- Fish Oil and Omega 3 fatty acid/Omega 6 fatty acid balance
- Homocysteine, measurement and nutritional therapy
- Ginkgo, Turmeric, Sage, Valerian, Lavender and other spices, oils and herbs with influence on brain health.

Other resources:

Daniel G. Amen, M.D. [Change Your Brain, Change Your Body](#) (affiliate)

Richard Brodie, [Virus of the Mind: The new Science of the Meme](#) (affiliate)

Rhonda Byrne, [The Secret](#) (affiliate)

Joe Dispenza, D. C., [Evolve Your Brain](#) (affiliate)

Tim Ferriss, [The Four Hour Body](#) (affiliate)

BJ Fogg, PhD Research Laboratory, Stanford University. (Expert on Behavior Change):
<http://www.bjfogg.com/>

Bruce Lipton, PhD, [Spontaneous Evolution](#) (affiliate), [Biology of Belief](#) (affiliate)

Joseph Murphy, [The Power of Your Subconscious Mind](#) (ChiroSummary)

Gary Taubes [Good Calories, Bad Calories](#), and more recent, [Why We Get Fat](#) (affiliate links)