



A Guide to The Two-Part Brain

“Any man could, if he were so inclined, be the sculptor of his own brain.”

–Santiago Ramón y Cajal–

The trauma of childhood sexual abuse can affect the way that your brain functions. For our purposes, we focus on two parts of the brain: the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex.

- The limbic system is also called the “primitive brain.” Its three prime directives are survival, avoiding pain, and seeking pleasure.
- The prefrontal cortex is also called the “rational brain.” It’s the moral, logical part of the brain.
- Childhood trauma affects your brain and throws your limbic system into overdrive, causing you to have triggering experiences even when you aren’t in imminent danger.
- Your prefrontal cortex and your limbic system can learn to work together, with the prefrontal cortex making the decisions.
- Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event. In the short-term, denial is typical, but in the long-term it can lead to unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms.
- Recognize the trauma voice. Understand where the voice is coming from. Learn to just “let IT be” without giving undo attention.
- Chronic stress fills our bodies with stress hormones, which impede healthy growth. Stress hormones counteract our natural healing response.
- By utilizing the 5 Strategies to Reclaim Hope you can rewire your brain to deal with trauma in a healthy way.

Suggested Reading

[The Body Keeps the Score](#) by Bessel van der Kolk

[The Brain’s Way of Healing](#) by Norman Doidge

[Trauma and Memory: Brain and Body in a Search for the Living Past](#) by Peter Levine