

3 December 2022
Saturday | 10 am to 12 noon

SoCM Equipping & Training Online
Building a Discipleship Community



**Building Mental Resilience and
Spiritual Wellness through the Gospel**

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2. Biblical Perspective on Mental Resilience and Spiritual Wellness
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8. **Using Scriptural Truths to Build Mental Resilience and Spiritual Wellness**
 - I. Build on the Truths of FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE in Christ
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APPENDIX

- A. **Lessons from Mental Illness Real-Life Life Story**
- B. The Priority of Our Mind—the Mind As God’s Great Gift to Us* (For reading)
- C. 1st Biological Evidence Our Body and Brain are wired to connect with God*(For reading)
- D. 2nd Biological Evidence Our Body and Brain are wired to connect with God*(For reading)

1. The State of Mental Health in Singapore*

What is the State of Mental Health in Singapore?

By Anastassia Evlanova 15 April 2019

- It is estimated that [about 18% of Singapore's youth](#) suffer from depression. Children and young adults tend to [face an increased chance](#) of developing depression and anxiety due to chemical changes in the brain arising from puberty, societal and academic pressures and uncontrollable factors in their home life.
- A study found that around [11.4% of community-dwelling elderly](#) may report symptoms of depression, compared to the national average of 6.3%.

<https://sg.finance.yahoo.com/news/state-mental-health-singapore-192021797.html>

Youths and Adolescents

8. The National Youth Council (NYC) conducted regular polls on Singaporean youths' challenges and sentiments on COVID-19, between April and December 2020. Survey results are shown in [Figure 6](#). These findings demonstrated the importance of identifying ways to support youth through the pandemic, such as strengthening their ability to cope with anxiety and uncertainty, promoting help-seeking behaviours, and assurances about education prospects and career support.



Mental well-being remained a challenge for over half of the youth population (52%) polled during the second half of 2020

Top stressors cited by youth were:



Anxiety over the future (53%)



Stress over finances (41%)



Worries about academic or work performance (39%)

Figure 6: Results of National Youth Council's regular polls on Singaporean youths' challenges and sentiments on COVID-19

<https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/covid-19-report/comwt-report.pdf>

Mental Well-Being during the Pandemic

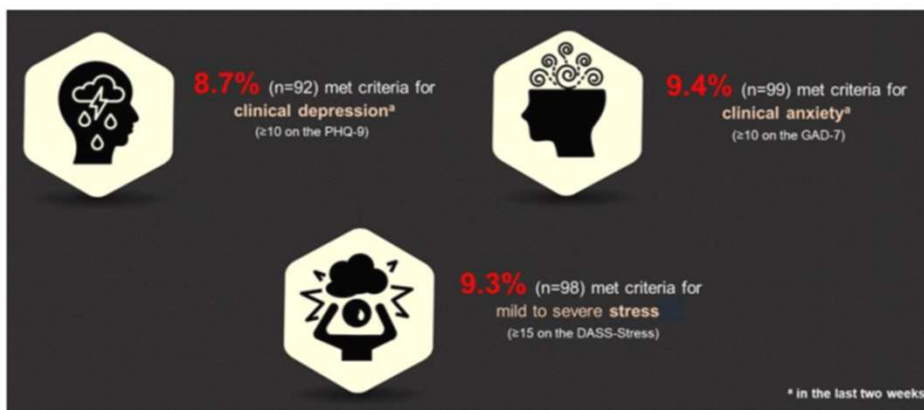


Figure 1: Proportions of survey respondents who met the criteria for clinical depression, anxiety, or mild to severe stress

<https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/covid-19-report/comwt-report.pdf>

NUMBER OF DEATHS BY SUICIDE IN SINGAPORE

From 2016 to 2020

Age	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
0-19	22	12	22	23	30
20-29	77	61	72	71	71
30-39	67	55	60	62	66
40-49	66	48	58	60	76
50-59	74	56	70	62	55
60-69	65	57	57	58	69
70-79	39	44	39	39	55
80-84	7	11	14	16	18
85 and above	12	17	5	9	12
Total	429	361	397	400	452

Infographic: Kenneth Choy
Source: Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, annual births and deaths statistics



Michael Yong

19 Sep 2021 06:00AM
(Updated: 19 Sep 2021 06:00AM)

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/suicide-mental-health-singapore-depression-help-sos-imh-2182036>

- The number of suicides for 2021 fell to 378,
- The number of suicides among youths aged 10 to 29 hit a record high of 112 cases in 2021, up by 11 cases from the year before

today

Singaporeans are leading healthier lives but experiencing more mental health problems: Survey



BY NABILAH AWANG

Published July 5, 2021
Updated August 31, 2022

The survey highlighted the pandemic's impact on the mental health of Singaporeans, who cited financial and work stress as the top reasons for mental health issues.

- A majority of Singaporeans are more motivated to be healthy, with 72 per cent of respondents declaring physical health a priority
- They are also spending more time and money on their health
- But 24 per cent of respondents felt anxious and 21 per cent said they were depressed
- Nearly four in 10 respondents said they had considered suicide at some point, with 13 per cent thinking about it at least once a week

<https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/singaporeans-leading-healthier-lives-but-experiencing-more-mental-health-problems-survey>

THE STRAITS TIMES

SINGAPORE

About 1 in 3 young people in Singapore has mental health symptoms: Study



Ang Qing

PUBLISHED MAY 20, 2022, 10:51 PM SGT



SINGAPORE - About one in three youth in Singapore has reported internalising mental health symptoms such as sadness, anxiety and loneliness, a national study has found.

Those aged 14 to 16 had more serious symptoms.

These were among preliminary findings from a survey that is part of the Singapore Youth Epidemiology and Resilience Study involving 3,336 young people aged 11 to 18 here.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/about-1-in-3-youths-in-singapore-has-mental-health-symptoms-study>

2. Biblical Perspective on Mental Resilience and Spiritual Wellness

We Are Created in God's Image

Then God said, "Let us **make man in our image**, after **our likeness**. And let them have dominion . . . over all the earth . . ."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

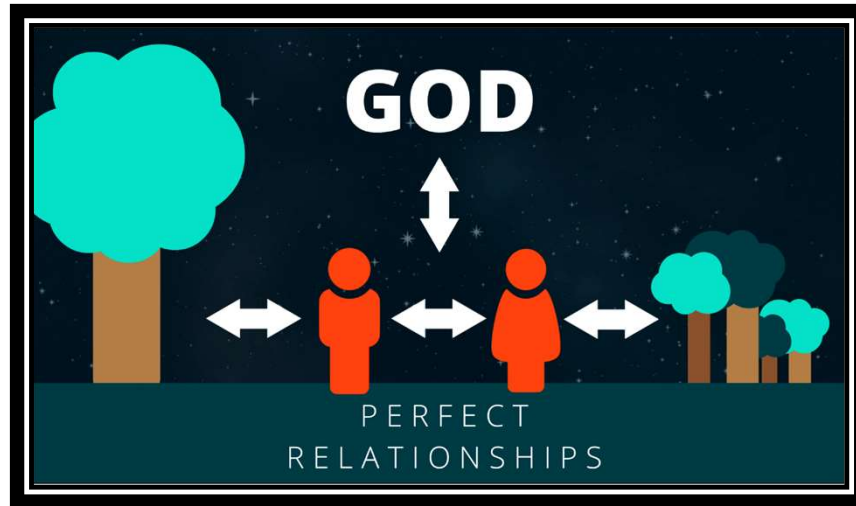
Gen 1:26-27

How God Has Wired Us for Relationships

And you shall **love the Lord** your God from your whole **heart** and from your whole **soul** and from your whole **mind** and from your whole **strength**.' The second is this: 'You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these

Mark 12:30-31

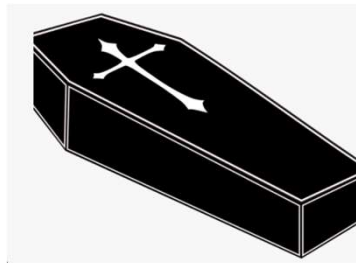
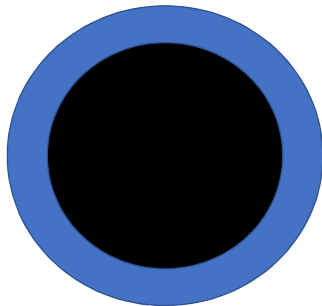
The Peace (Shalom) in Eden



Consequences of SIN

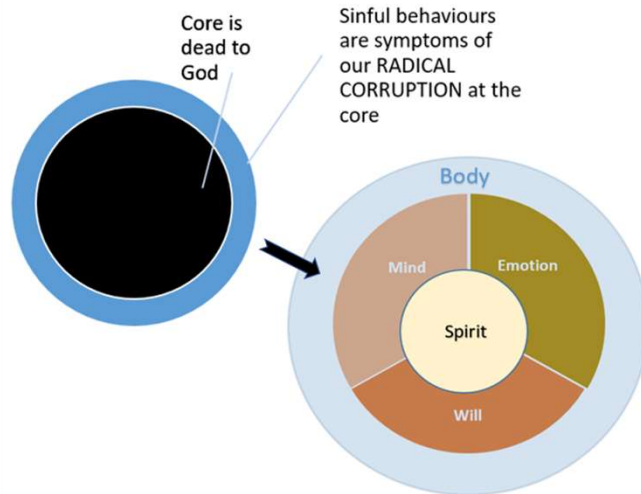
Gen 2:17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **in dying you shall die.**"

Spiritual Death → Physical Death → Eternal Death



Man's Misery after the Fall

1) The present effects of sin on man: STATE OF MISERY



SPIRIT: DEAD, LOST COMMUNION WITH GOD AND PURPOSE FOR EXISTENCE

MIND: FOOLISH, DARKENED AND HOSTILE TOWARDS GOD, BELIEF IN LIES OF SATAN, SUPPRESS THE TRUTHS ABOUT GOD, PROUD, GIVEN TO EVIL DESIGNS. (ROM 1:18-32, ROM 8:7,8)

EMOTIONS: ANXIOUS, BITTER, DEPRESS, FEARFUL, SHAME, GUILT, ANGER, FEELINGS OF ISOLATION, LUST, HATRED, DESIRE PLEASURES AND THINGS OF THE WORLD MORE THAN GOD, CRAVE EVIL.

WILL: WALK AFTER THE FLESH PRODUCING SEXUAL SINS, SINFUL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS DESCRIBED IN GAL 5:19-21

BODY: TENSION, NERVOUS BREAKDOWN, MENTAL ILLNESS, HEART PALPITATION, HEADACHES, IRRITABLE BOWELS, ALLERGIES, CHRONIC ILLNESS, AGING, DEATH.

Mental Illness like Physical Illness is the effect of the Fall, it is part of the lost of our Shalom.

3. The Challenges of Mental Illness

The Effects of Mental Illness

- Mental illness affects more than just the person with the disorder; it affects all of their relationships.
- Difficulties, stigma, and shame often isolate whole families trying to care for a mentally ill loved one from the world around them.
- In addition, high levels of stress and difficult symptoms can result in relational conflict requiring forgiveness and reconciliation.

Stanford, Matthew S. 2017. [*Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness*](#). Westmont, IL: IVP Books.

Overcoming Stigma

- Stigma is always born out of fear and misinformation, and can only be overcome by truth and education.
- Don't own them.
- Mental health difficulties are not the result of personal sin, having a weak faith, or demonic oppression. All believers struggle with sin and weakness of faith at times, but God still chooses to love and care for us.

Stanford, Matthew S. 2017. [Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness. Westmont, IL: IVP Books.](#)

Mental Illness Is a Trial

- People living with mental illness can behave in strange and bizarre ways. Their perception of the world and those around them can be very different.
- They may even perceive your attempts to help them as a threat. They may deny that they have a problem. They may refuse to be involved in treatment.
- Don't expect appreciation; in fact, you might receive just the opposite. **This is as much your trial as it is that of the person with the disorder. God wants to use it to draw you and your loved one closer to him.**

Stanford, Matthew S. 2017. [Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness. Westmont, IL: IVP Books.](#)

4. Clinical Perspective On Mental Illness

Our Brain is Highly Biological

Just the mind activity from your reading of the next few lines generates electromagnetic, electrochemical, and quantum action in your neurons. It causes

- magnetic fields that can be measured;
- electrical impulses that can be tracked;
- chemical effects that can be seen and measured;
- photons to be activated that can be captured on computer screens;
- energy activity that can be explained using quantum physics; and
- vibrations in the membranes of the neurons that can be picked up by instrumentation.

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [*Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

What is Mental Illness

- Mental illness is a significant disruption of a person's *thoughts, moods, behavior, or ability to relate to others*, severe enough to require treatment or intervention
- Mental disorders result from a developmental or cumulative complex interaction of **biological (nature)** and **environmental (nurture) factors**.

Adapted from *Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness*. Westmont, IL: IVP Books.

Types of Mental Illness

- **Schizophrenia:** delusion (false belief), hallucination, disorganized thinking/behaviour/speech, agitation, unaware of environment, diminished ability to be engaged.
- **Bipolar Disorder:** Swing between highs (Increased energy for a week or more) and lows (Depressed, loss of interest in daily activities for 2 weeks or more).
- **Depressive Disorder:** Depressed, loss interest, weight or appetite or sleep pattern change, fatigue, feel worthless or guilty, can't concentrate, indecisive, suicidal thoughts.
- **Anxiety Disorder:** Severe and chronic Panic attack, consuming wave of fear and dread of death or losing control.

Types of Mental Illness

- **Personality Disorders:** Distortion in *thoughts* or inability to regulate *feelings* or *behaviour* leading to *interpersonal difficulties*.
 - paranoid, suspicious, hypersensitive; dramatic-erratic: anti-social or unstable self-image or excessive emotions; anxious-fearful: avoidant, excessive dependency, preoccupied with orderliness (OCD).
- **Trauma & Stress related disorders:** Social Engagement disorder resulting from neglect before 5 yrs old **OR** psychological distress beyond a month caused by traumatic events.
- **Neurological Disorders:** Dementia, Physical Brain injuries.

Adapted from *Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness*. Westmont, IL: IVP Books.

What does Recovery look like?

- Recovery is not a complete cure

“Recovery is a **process of change** through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”

Stanford, Matthew S. 2017. [Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness](#). Westmont, IL: IVP Books.



Adapted from Stanford, Matthew S. 2017. [*Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness*](#). Westmont, IL: IVP Books.

5. Helping Someone Struggling with Mental Illness

Helping Someone Struggling with Mental Illness

- Physically: Usually require psychiatric medication to alter the way the neurons in the brain function chemically or electrically.
- Rest and Eat well.
- Exercise to relief stress, anxiety, and offset medication side effects.
- Mentally: Reframe negative thoughts, gather information, recognise stress cycles and triggers, learn skills and coping mechanisms, change situation. Seek to remove feelings of helplessness.
- Structure routines to increase certainty, control over activities and reduce too much decision making.
- Engage the mind in learning activities or hobbies to build up mental reserves.
- **Work on the Spiritual and Relational Support.**

What to do if you meet someone you suspect is thinking of suicide

- Don't ignore them or down play what they say.
- Attend to them by listening with empathy.
- Ask what had happened
- **Ask if they have a plan to end their lives:** how, when, where?
- Don't ask why, instead ask about their concerns
- Provide alternative perspectives
- Arrange with them to seek professional mental health care.

Risk Factor by Life Stage

Children/Youth

- Severe stress - from parents' /family relationship issues/breakdown, family rejection, bullying etc. situations where hopelessness is experienced
- Crisis and trauma – from abuse and/or traumatic loss
- Previous attempts and self-harm
- Social media and negative peer pressure e.g. suicide pacts

Adults

- Severe stress - from financial issues, job issues, marital/relationship issues/breakdown
- Mental health conditions - depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, personality disorders/issues, PTSD etc.
- Substance abuse/misuse

Elderly

- Severe stress - from social isolation, loss of spouse (grief), family rejection, financial issues etc. situations where hopelessness is experienced
- Chronic illness and pain
- Unhealthy belief system - wanting not to be a burden to children

Observable behaviours:

Sudden changes and uncharacteristic behaviours

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking about wanting to die or suicide - Talking about feeling hopeless, trapped or having no reason to live - Putting affairs in order - Planning how to suicide - Increased alcohol or drug use - Extreme changes in sleep/mood - Drawing up a will | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suddenly giving away prized possessions - Behaving in a less cautious way - Reckless behaviours - Becoming withdrawn and socially isolation - Saying goodbye to loved ones without reason - Showing less care than usual to someone / something - Taking uncharacteristic risks - Writing a suicide note |
|--|---|

Helplines for emotional or psychological support

National Care Hotline: 1800-202-6868

(8am-12am daily, from 1 Sep 2020)

Mental Well-being

- [Fei Yue's Online Counselling Service](#)
- Institute of Mental Health's Mental Health Helpline (6389-2222)
- Samaritans of Singapore (1800-221-4444)
- [Silver Ribbon Singapore](#) (6385-3714)

Marital and parenting issues

- [Community Psychology Hub's Online Counselling platform](#)

Violence or abuse

- [Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre](#) (6445-0400)
- [HEART @ Fei Yue Child Protection Specialist Centre](#) (6819-9170)
- [PAVE Integrated Services for Individual and Family Protection](#) (6555-0390)
- [Project StART](#) (6476-1482)
- [TRANS SAFE Centre](#) (6449-9088)

Counselling

- [TOUCHline \(Counselling\)](#) - 1800 377 2252

For other Helplines and mental health-related support

- go.gov.sg/hotlines (BELLE, Beyond the Label helpbot)
- www.msf.gov.sg/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx

6. Our Redemption and Restoration In Christ as key to Recovery and Resilience

The Shalom from Jesus

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (**Joh 14:27**)

The Shalom in the Lord Jesus

- Luk 2:40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.
- Luk 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

A wholistic approach

A holistic mental health approach addresses the whole individual:

- **physical needs** (e.g., sleeping well, medication, relaxation, nutrition, and exercise),
- **mental needs** (e.g., healthy thinking, coping with problems or stress, mindfulness, cycles and triggers, and mental activities),
- **spiritual needs** (e.g., hope, knowing your identity, finding purpose, spiritual growth, and living in community), and
- **relational needs** (e.g., family and friends, resolving conflict, overcoming stigma, opportunities to serve, and forgiveness).

We're Physical Beings in Spiritual War, and the Mind is the Beachhead

- 2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.
- 2Co 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but **have divine power to destroy strongholds**.
- **2Co 10:5** We **destroy arguments** and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**,

Biblical Prescription for Mental Resilience and Spiritual Wellness

- Php 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.
- Php 4:5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;
- Php 4:6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- Php 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- Php 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

7. Building Habits that Renew Our Minds by Leveraging How Our Brains Function

The Call to Renew Our Minds, And Not Be Conformed to the Pattern of This World

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2 NIV

- Our choices change our brain
- Through our thoughts we can be our own micro surgeons as we make choices that will change the circuits in our brains.
- We are designed to do our own brain surgery and rewire our brains by thinking and by choosing to renew our minds.

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. *Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

The Plasticity of the Brain

BRAIN FACTS

- Number of neurons in the brain (average): 100 billion
- Number of neocortical neurons lost each day: 85,000
- The good news: The brain continues to produce new neurons throughout our lives, and it does so in response to stimulation (exercise). This is referred to as *brain plasticity*.

Toler, Stan. 2017. *The Power of Your Brain: Harnessing the Potential of a Renewed Mind*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

The way the brain changes as a result of mental activity is scientifically called ***neuroplasticity***.



Why it takes 21 days to form a new habit

- **Whatever you think about the most will grow,** so the more the cycle moves with a particular thought, the stronger it grows . . .



It takes around twenty-one days of this cycling for all the necessary protein changes to happen to create a long-term integrated memory.

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

The Power of Repetitions/Habits

- It is our choices that either create healthy thought universes in our brain or turn the powerless lie into a toxic thought universe—which is essentially evil.
- This is the incredible power God has given us: to be able to think and choose and create reality. This reality can be good or evil based on our choices.
- After a period of repeated thinking about the choice **over two to three cycles of twenty-one days**, the new thought moves **into the nonconscious metacognitive level** where it becomes part of our internal perception. **This process is called automatization.**
- Everything you do and say is first a thought.
- The nonconscious metacognitive mind is filled with the thoughts you have been building since you were born, and **they form the perceptual base from which you see life.**

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [*Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.



Research shows deep-thinking exercises repeated over 21 days help create long-lasting change

- As we think, we change the physical nature of our brain. As we consciously direct our thinking, we can wire out toxic patterns of thinking and replace them with healthy thoughts. New thought networks grow. We increase our intelligence and bring healing to our brains, minds, and physical bodies.
- It all starts in the realm of the mind, with our ability to think and choose—the most powerful thing in the universe after God, and indeed, fashioned after God.

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [*Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Repeated rethinking in a sequenced way over 1 or more 21 days cycles help to sink roots and form stable memory

- Step 1. **Decide** to accept or reject an incoming thought from becoming a part of you—if it is a wrong-riding or unhealthy thought, confess it and repent by choosing not to think about it.
- Step 2. **Rehearse** particular healthy thoughts and things mentally over and over. (Phi 4:8)
- Step 3. **Write** down to add clarity and consolidate your memory, putting your brain on paper. Eg. do a mind map. Writing requires deep thinking and activates complex cognitive and metacognitive processes.
- Step 4. **Revisit** the written thoughts and build new ones on them. Evaluate your reactions, where you come from, where you are going. Solve your problem not in one day but over the 21 days.
- Step 5. **Act** on your new decision with confession and action. Eg. Say verbally, “I choose to stop doing . . . from now.” This is to align your words and action to your beliefs and decision.

Adapted from Leaf's 5 steps to switch on your brain in her 21 days detox program

8. Using Scriptural Truths to Build Mental Resilience and Spiritual Wellness

Building Mental Reserve and Resilience by Renewing Our Minds

II. Build on the foundation of FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE in Christ

I. Build *OTHER HABITS* on the foundation of Faith, love and hope in Christ

Cognitive (neural) reserve is the complexity and redundancy of neural networks in the brain that provide a buffer against loss of function following aging, brain injury, or mental illness.

- Stanford, Matthew S. 2017. *Grace for the Afflicted*

The Practise of Renewing our Mind

I. Build on the Truths of FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE in Christ

Hope

- Hope is the fuel that drives the engine of mental health recovery. As long as one has hope, there is motivation and opportunity for change.

Stanford, Matthew S. 2017. [Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness](#). Westmont, IL: [IVP Books](#).

a. Discovering Hope in the Gospel

- This I recall to my mind,
- Therefore I have hope.
- The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,
- For His compassions never fail.
- *They are new every morning;*
- Great is Your faithfulness.

(Lamentations 3:21-23)

What this Hope Is and Does

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused **us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1Pe 1:3)

What this hope is (see how we are dearly loved by God):

- to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,
- who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1Pe 1:4-5)

What this hope does:

- In this **you rejoice**, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have **been grieved by various trials**,
- so that the **tested genuineness of your faith**—more precious than gold that perishes though it is **tested by fire**—may be found to **result in praise and glory** and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pe 1:6-7)

Hope prepares our mind and body for obedience in action

- 1Pe 1:13 Therefore, **preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Practise Hope—Rejoice in what I have In Christ :

Since I am in Christ, by the grace of God ...

- I have been justified—completely forgiven and made righteous (Romans 5:1).
- I died with Christ and died to the power of sin's rule over my life (Romans 6:1–6).
- I am free forever from condemnation (Romans 8:1).
- I have been placed into Christ by God's doing (1 Cor. 1:30).
- I have received the Spirit of God into my life that I might know the things freely given to me by God (1 Cor. 2:12).
- I have been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).
- I have been bought with a price; I am not my own; I belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).
- I have been established, anointed and sealed by God in Christ, and I have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing our inheritance to come (2 Cor. 1:21; Ephes. 1:13, 14).
- Since I have died, I no longer live for myself, but for Christ (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).
- I have been made righteous (2 Cor. 5:21).
- I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I am now living is Christ's life (Galatians 2:20).
- I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephes. 1:3).
- I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and am without blame before Him (Ephes. 1:4).
- I was predestined—determined by God—to be adopted as God's son (Ephes. 1:5).

In Christ I have:

- I have been redeemed and forgiven, and I am a recipient of His lavish grace (Ephes. 1:17).
- I have been made alive together with Christ (Ephes. 2:5).
- I have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven (Ephes. 2:6).
- I have direct access to God through the Spirit (Ephes. 2:18).
- I may approach God with boldness, freedom and confidence (Ephes. 3:12).
- I have been rescued from the domain of Satan's rule and transferred to the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13).
- I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. The debt against me has been canceled (Col. 1:14).
- Christ Himself is in me (Col. 1:27).
- I am firmly rooted in Christ and am now being built in Him (Col. 2:7).
- I have been made complete in Christ (Col. 2:10).
- I have been spiritually circumcised (Col. 2:11).
- I have been buried, raised and made alive with Christ (Col. 2:12, 13).
- I died with Christ and I have been raised up with Christ. My life is now hidden with Christ in God. Christ is now my life (Col. 3:1–4).
- I have been given a spirit of power, love and self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7).
- I have been saved and set apart according to God's doing (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5).
- Because I am sanctified and am one with the Sanctifier, He is not ashamed to call me brother (Hebrews 2:11).
- I have the right to come boldly before the throne of God to find mercy and grace in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).
- I have been given exceedingly great and precious promises by God by which I am a partaker of God's divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

Anderson, Neil T. 1990. *Victory Over the Darkness*. Gospel Light.

b. Receiving Love through Our Identity in Christ

- Our identity is not based on some expert opinion/diagnosis of our health condition, or mental state, nor our circumstances and struggles
- But on God, what we mean to Him
- Based on the Cross of Christ

“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Rom 8:32)

“who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1Pe 1:4-5)

Practise Love—Receive God’s Love through who I am in Christ

- I am the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13).
- I am the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).
- I am a child of God (John 1:12).
- I am part of the true vine, a channel of Christ’s life (John 15:1, 5).
- I am Christ’s friend (John 15:15).
- I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit (John 15:16).
- I am a slave of righteousness (Romans 6:18).
- I am enslaved to God (Romans 6:22).
- I am a son of God; God is spiritually my Father (Romans 8:14, 15; Galatians 3:26; Galatians 4:6).
- I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him (Romans 8:17).
- I am a temple—a dwelling place—of God. His Spirit and His life dwells in me (1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19).
- I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).
- I am a member of Christ’s Body (1 Cor. 12:27; Ephes. 5:30).
- I am a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
- I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18, 19).
- I am a son of God and one in Christ (Galatians 3:26, 28).
- I am an heir of God since I am a son of God (Galatians 4:6, 7).
- I am a saint (1 Cor. 1:2; Ephes. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2).
- I am God’s workmanship—His handiwork—born anew in Christ to do His work (Ephes. 2:10).

In Christ I am:

- I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family (Ephes. 2:19).
- I am a prisoner of Christ (Ephes. 3:1; Ephes. 4:1).
- I am righteous and holy (Ephes. 4:24).
- I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now (Ephes. 2:6; Phil. 3:20).
- I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).
- I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Col. 3:4).
- I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 1:4).
- I am a son of light and not of darkness (1 Thes. 5:5).
- I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1).
- I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life (Hebrews 3:14).
- I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5).
- I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Peter 2:9, 10).
- I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live (1 Peter 2:11).
- I am an enemy of the devil (1 Peter 5:8).
- I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns (1 John 3:1, 2).
- I am born of God, and the evil one—the devil—cannot touch me (1 John 5:18).
- I am *not* the great "I am" (Exodus 3:14; John 8:24, 28, 58), but by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Cor. 15:10).

Anderson, Neil T. 1990. *Victory Over the Darkness*. Gospel Light.

c. Practise Faith by Living Out God's Purpose for Our lives

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this *is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God;*

it is not from works, so that no one can boast.

For we are his creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we may walk in them.

Eph 2:8-10

Practise Faith—Rely on God to realise what I can do in Christ:

1. Why should I say I can't when the Bible says I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength (Phil. 4:13)?
2. Why should I worry about my needs when I know that God will take care of all my needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19)?
3. Why should I fear when the Bible says God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7)?
4. Why should I lack faith to live for Christ when God has given me a measure of faith (Romans 12:3)?
5. Why should I be weak when the Bible says that the Lord is the strength of my life and that I will display strength and take action because I know God (Psalm 27:1; Daniel 11:32)?
6. Why should I allow Satan control over my life when He that is in me is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4)?
7. Why should I accept defeat when the Bible says that God always leads me in victory (2 Cor. 2:14)?
8. Why should I lack wisdom when I know that Christ became wisdom to me from God and God gives wisdom to me generously when I ask Him for it (1 Cor. 1:30; James 1:5)?
9. Why should I be depressed when I have hope and can recall to mind God's loving-kindness, compassion and faithfulness (Lament. 3:21–23)?
10. Why should I worry and be upset when I can cast all my anxieties on Christ who cares for me (1 Peter 5:7)?

In Christ I Can:

11. Why should I ever be in bondage knowing that there is freedom where the Spirit of the Lord is (2 Cor. 3:17)?
12. Why should I feel condemned when the Bible says there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1)?
13. Why should I feel alone when Jesus said He is with me always and He will never leave me nor forsake me (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5)?
14. Why should I feel as if I'm cursed or have bad luck when the Bible says that Christ rescued me from the curse of the law that I might receive His Spirit by faith (Galatians 3:13, 14)?
15. Why should I be unhappy when I, like Paul, can learn to be content whatever the circumstances (Phil. 4:11)?
16. Why should I feel worthless when Christ became sin for me so that I might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21)?
17. Why should I feel helpless in the presence of others when I know that if God is for me, who can be against me (Romans 8:31)?
18. Why should I be confused when God is the author of peace and He gives me knowledge through His spirit who lives in me (1 Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 14:33)?
19. Why should I feel like a failure when I am more than a conqueror through Christ who loved me (Romans 8:37)?
20. Why should I let the pressures of life bother me when I can take courage knowing that Jesus has overcome the world and its problems (John 16:33)?

Anderson, Neil T. 1990. *Victory Over the Darkness*. Gospel Light.

The Practise of Renewing our Mind

II. Build *OTHER HABITS* on the Foundation of Faith, Love, and Hope in Christ

a. Grow Spiritually

- 1Pe 2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—
- 1Pe 2:3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- Jos 1:8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

b. Practise God's Presence

Psa 46

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, . . .

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; . . .

The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. . .

Come, behold the works of the LORD, . . .

"Be still, and know that I am God. . . ."

Example of Practising God's presence

- Frank Laubach was an American missionary in the Philippines who learned by practice the value of making the most of small moments.
- After 14 years of waiting and many failed attempts, through God's help, Frank eventually found ways to reach the Moro Muslims
- The hill behind his home became Laubach's place of ongoing conversation with God.
- Wanting even more, Laubach made a great experiment—of first trying to think of God **every fifteen minutes** while he worked (**or at least every half-hour**),
- and eventually trying to think of God one second of every minute.
- It sounds impossible, but by the end of that year, it had become his habit, so much a habit that he continued it for the rest of his life.

Boa, Kenneth. Life in the Presence of God (p. 24). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

c. Choose to Forgive

- Col 3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
- Col 3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you**, so you also must forgive.

d. Live and Serve in the Church Community

“rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep”
(Romans 12:15).

“**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly**, teaching and **admonishing one another** in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Col 3:16)

Empirical Evidence on the Importance of Spiritual and Social Support

Thomas E. Oxman et al., "Lack of Social Participation or Religious Strength and Comfort as Risk Factors for Death after Cardiac Surgery in the Elderly," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 57 (1995): 5.

showed that those undergoing heart surgery who had spiritual support in the form of prayer and social support showed a mortality rate one seventh of those who did not.

This research affirms the place of the prayer cum care ministry and community in the church.

What the Church Offers Because of the Gospel

The body of Christ offers five things the professional mental/health care system lacks:

- (1) a hope and purpose that transcends this life and its sufferings
- (2) an unconditionally high and wholistic view of every person
- (3) love and support from a faith community
- (4) the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit
- (5) a secure relationship and reliance on the God who never fails

We Embody Christ within His Body When We

- love one another unconditionally (John 13:34; 1 John 3:11),
- bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2),
- pray for one another (James 5:16).

Or the love of God does not abide in us (1 John 3:17) and our faith is of no value (James 2:14-17).

Serving Lovingly Is Christlikeness

- "Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me'" (Matthew 25:40 *The Message*).
- "I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15 NLT)

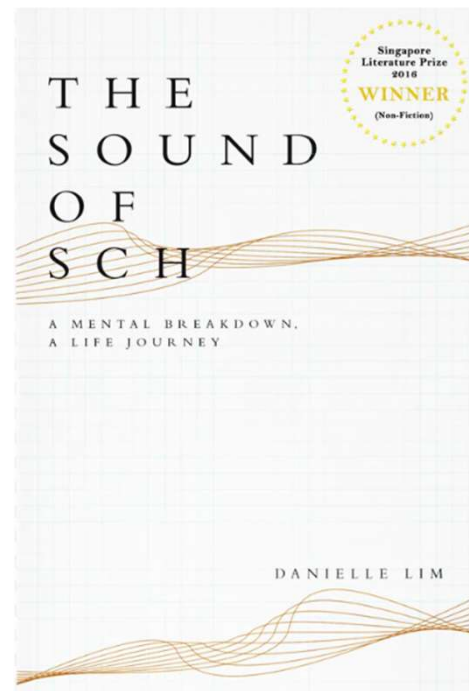
e. Take Care of Your Body

- Eat well
- Sleep well
- Exercise

APPENDIX

A. Lessons from Mental Illness Real-Life Story*

A real-life journey of living with mental illness



Beauty in God's Eyes—A Lifetime of Serving Lovingly Is Christlikeness

- “Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me’” (Matthew 25:40 *The Message*).
- “I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15 NLT)
- “And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box.” (Mk 12:42-43 ESV)

B. The Priority of Our Mind—the Mind As God's Great Gift to Us*

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, . . .

(2Pe 1:3)

One of these many gifts from God is a MIND to know and honour Him!

The mind as a great gift from God

The mind, the understanding, is man's supreme gift; it is undoubtedly a part of the image of God in man.

Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Faith on Trial*, 75

The priority of the mind

We must always realise when we talk to others that the heart is never to be approached directly. I go further; the will is never to be approached directly either. This is a most important principle to bear in mind both in personal dealings and in preaching. The heart is always to be influenced through the understanding—the mind then the heart, then the will,

Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Spiritual Depression*, 62

Designed to live for God through our Mind and Will

- One of the most exciting features of frontal lobes is how they enable us in a sense to stand outside ourselves and observe our own thinking.
- We can observe our thoughts and actions and make decisions about them.
- Suddenly, biblical principles such as “bringing all thoughts into captivity,” “renewing your mind,” “casting all your cares,” and “being anxious for nothing” become less difficult when we realize God has given us the equipment to do these things

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Set the Direction of Your Mind

The trouble is not in their minds, it is in the thing that controls their minds. The thing that matters in a person is 'the *spirit of the mind*', that essence, that ultimate power of control which determines everything else. The interior principle of the mind which directs all its processes is what must be renewed, not the mind itself. **It is the direction of the mind that needs to be controlled and to be changed.**

Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Christian Conduct*, 107

Every decision we make affects our ability to guard our mind and thinking

Every time you make a choice **you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different** from what it was before.

And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature; . . .

C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*

Watch what we feed our Minds with

- **What we think about is what we become.** Unfortunately, many of us disregard this truth and carelessly ingest unhealthy content into our minds that inevitably produces a myriad of unhealthy thoughts, attitudes, and eventually, behaviors
- Be willing to **surrender what you are for what you could become**

Toler, Stan. 2017. *The Power of Your Brain: Harnessing the Potential of a Renewed Mind*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Surrender Your Mind

- The first thing that must happen to you before you can ever become a Christian is that **you must surrender that little mind of yours**, and begin to say, 'Of course I cannot understand it; my whole nature is against it. I can see that there is only one thing to do; I submit myself to the revelation that God has been pleased to give'.

Martyn Lloyd Jones, Assurance, 251.

Jesus as Lord of our Minds

- As Christians, we are to surrender our minds so that Jesus becomes Lord of the way we think

Toler, Stan. 2017. *The Power of Your Brain: Harnessing the Potential of a Renewed Mind*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

C. 1st Biological Evidence Our Body and Brain are wired to connect with God*

- **Dr. Gail Ironson**, a leading mind-body medicine researcher and professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Miami
- Ran her study over four years and her determination of healing was based on the decrease of their viral load, the amount of the AIDS virus in a sample of blood, and the increased concentration of “helper T-cells” — the higher the concentration, the more the body is able to fight disease.
- She found that those who did not believe God loved them lost helper T-cells three times faster. Their viral load also increased three times faster, and their stress levels were higher, with damaging amounts of cortisol flowing.
- Dr. Ironson summarizes her research by saying, “If you believe God loves you, it’s an enormously protective factor, even more protective than scoring low for depression or high for optimism. A view of a benevolent God is protective, but scoring high on the *personalized statement ‘God loves me’* is even stronger.”

Gail Ironson et al., “An Increase in Religiousness/Spirituality Occurs after HIV Diagnosis and Predicts Slower Disease Progression over Four Years in People with HIV,” *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 21 (2006): 62–68.

The Science is called Epigenetics

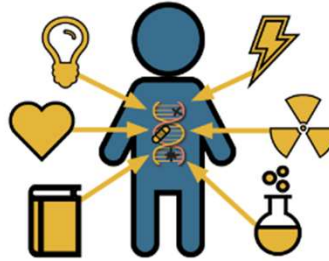
- Epigenetics is **the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work.**
- Unlike genetic changes, **epigenetic changes are reversible**
- and do not change your DNA sequence,
- but **they can change how your body reads** a DNA sequence.

EPIGENETICS EXPLAINS HOW EARLY EXPERIENCES CAN HAVE LIFELONG IMPACTS.



Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Thus, the epigenome can be affected by positive experiences, such as supportive relationships and opportunities for learning...

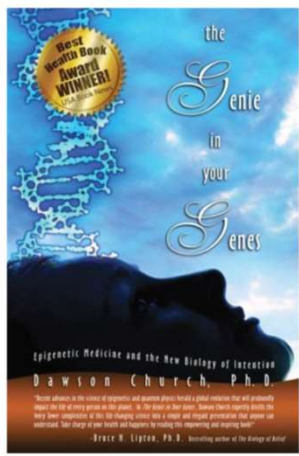


... or negative influences, such as environmental toxins or stressful life circumstances ...

... which leave a unique epigenetic “signature” on the genes. These signatures can be temporary or permanent and both types affect how easily the genes are switched on or off. Recent research demonstrates that there may be ways to reverse certain negative changes and restore healthy functioning. But the very best strategy is to support responsive relationships and reduce stress to build strong brains from the beginning.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/what-is-epigenetics-and-how-does-it-relate-to-child-development/>

The Genie in Your Genes by Dawson Church



Voted Best Health Book, USA Booknews National Awards says:

- “Your genes don't control your health or happiness outcomes; in fact many of the choices you make turn genes on or off. . .”
- Citing 417 scientific studies, he shows how consciousness—in the form of beliefs, altruism, optimism, meditation, emotions. . . can trigger the expression of DNA strands.
- A class of genes called **Immediate Early Genes or IEGs. . . are regulatory genes**
 - They turn on other genes that affect specific aspects of our immune system,
 - They can be triggered by thoughts or emotions . . . , spiritual experiences, and acts of kindness.
- thus influencing our health every day.

D. 2nd Biological Evidence Our Body and Brain are wired to connect with God*

The way our brain functions

I. Nonconscious Metacognitive Level (Default Mode Network—DMN)

- On the far left where 90 to 99% of the action is;
- thinking and thought-building happen here
- Operates 24/7 @ 400, 000, 000, 000 actions/s
- drives the ***Conscious Cognitive Level***.

II. Conscious Cognitive Level

- In the middle where 10% of mind action is.
- operates @ waking hours @ 2000 actions/s
- controlled by the ***Metacognitive Level***.
- drives the ***Symbolic Output Level***—what you say and do

III. Symbolic Action Level

- Operates the 5 senses
- Connect the external and the internal world of your mind.
- Received information from the ***Conscious Cognitive Level***, and then passes to the ***Nonconscious Metacognitive Level***
- The ***Metacognitive*** process the information, impact the ***Cognitive Level*** and then the ***Action Level*** so the cycle goes on.

Adapted from Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Nonconscious Metacognitive Level (Default Mode Network—DMN)

- 60 to 80 percent of all energy used by the brain occurs in circuits inside the brain that are unrelated to any external signal. This is all predominant DMN activity
- In fact, miswiring of brain regions involved in the DMN, leading to all kinds of ups and downs in the DMN, may even be part of disorders ranging from Alzheimer's to schizophrenia to other neuropsychiatric disorders.
- brain areas that atrophy and die in Alzheimer's overlap with major centers of the DMN.

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [*Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Accessing the Default Mode Network (DMN) of our brains (*the Nonconscious Metacognitive Level*)

- The DMN is a primary network that we switch into when we switch off from the outside world and move into a state of focused mindfulness.
- When we pray, when we catch our thoughts, when we memorize and quote Scripture, we move into this deep meditative state. This great state of mind is also activated
- It is like a mental rebooting process to reconnect with who we are and with our Savior to bring perspective to the issues of life.

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [*Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

The Brain Needs Sabbath Rest

- In fact, **when we don't frequently slow down** and enter this rest state, this *Sabbath in the brain*, **we disrupt natural functions in the brain**.
- *Research shows that when we don't engage in this disciplined and focused self-reflective pattern of thinking that activates the DMN, we may experience negative self-esteem, depression, worry, anxiety, and health issues, and over-focus on generalized and short-term memory issues.*
- *We may get stuck, unable to cope, and have a tendency to focus on the problem and not the solution. In fact, as things go wrong in the processing of information in the default mode network, the mishandled data is passed on to other networks in the brain where it creates additional problems.*
- *These additional problems can be experienced as memory issues, cloudy and fuzzy thinking, anxiety, depression, and many other manifestations including neuropsychiatric disorders*

Leaf, Caroline. 2013. [Switch on Your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

