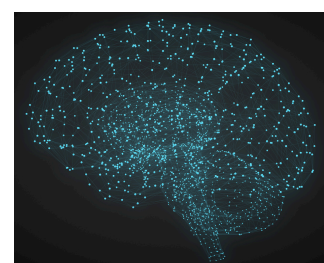


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Chapter 5: Character 2—Left Brain Emotional

Our thinking characters' job is to refine and/or modify the underlying neuroanatomical structures of our emotional characters are experiencing, while our emotional characters' job is to refine and/or modify the underlying neuroanatomical structures our reptilian brain. Which means that C2 and C3 are the difference between reptiles and mammals, while C1 and C4 are the difference between human beings and other mammals.

Our Reptilian Brain

Our reptilian stem structures are mostly automated structures, which is a great relief because it spares us from having to remember to breathe, beat our hearts or regulate our heartbeats. They are the seat of our survival instincts. She adds:

“Our reptilian inheritance specializes in these fundamental activities, as well as regulating our body temperature, managing our balance, and driving our need to mate.”

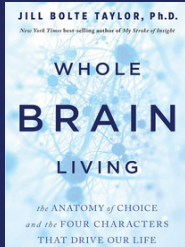
Those circuits are rigid and compulsive. They won't turn off until the need is met (e.g. hunger was met with food, thirst with water...). We cannot fall asleep until that part of our brain shuts down our alert response and floods us with neurochemicals that make us feel tired. Other cells are then in charge of waking us up. Any stimulation of those cells will trigger fixed patterns of behaviors. They drive what attracts and what repels us too. They originate all our reflexive responses.

And so we react first (reptilian brain), then we immediately have an emotion (C2 & C3) and only then can it infiltrate our consciousness (C1 & C4).

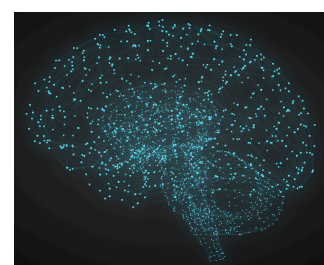
Feeling Creatures Who Think

Each hemisphere has one amygdala whose job is to make constant threat assessments, both on a physical and emotional level.

“At the most basic level, it is the job of our amygdalae to conceptually ask moment by moment, “Am I safe?”



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But here again our amygdalae function in a different way, with the left amygdalae comparing each present moment to what was and what could be and our right amygdalae focusing on the richness of right now. When all goes well, we rip the benefits of both.

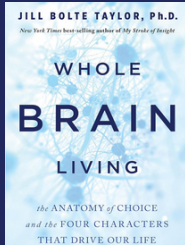
As a reminder, our right brain is what connects us to the whole, to our feminine energy, our yin and the present moment, and our left brain is what makes us feel separate from the whole, the seat of our ego-centered traits (ego meaning personality), our masculine energy, our yang.

And so understanding how those two processors function and realizing that they're always functioning in parallel we can understand why we so often encounter internal emotional conflicts. Because we are at all times seeing reality through two very different lenses. One grounded in the past and one only seeing the present.

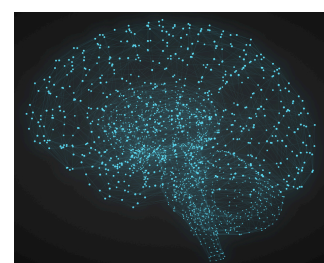
Anxiety And Fear

Our two emotional brains are mostly wired towards self-preservation. They modulate our fight.flight.freeze responses according to what our amygdalae are experiencing. And we are completely dependent on our emotional tissue to create memories—which is the job of our hippocampi. Interestingly, our hippocampi and amygdalae have antagonistic relationship and only one of them can be online at a time. Which means that we literally cannot form any memories when we're scared, since our hippocampi shut down the second our amygdalae light up. And which has tremendous implications especially in childhood when some children are trying to learn while experiencing very high stress.

Understanding the differences between our right and left brain's way of processing also allows us to differentiate fear and anxiety. Indeed fear is usually grounded in the present. It is triggered by a known, DEFINITE, IMMEDIATE threat. When we experience fear, we also experience a rush of energy within our system so that we can react and, if need be, escape. In contrast, anxiety, while experienced in the present, is triggered by remembering moments from our past or anticipating moments from our future. It creates agitation within our system but it tends to drain us of our energy and to lead us towards self-doubt and despair. It is generally triggered by worry, or thoughts about NON definite or immediate threats that might be lurking in the background and threaten our security. Seeing a venomous snake is a proof of imminent peril. Thinking that another venomous snake might appear is a thought of a potential imminent peril.



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Now, it is paramount for us to realize that training our C1 to override C2's anxiety is not an effective way to tend to our needs. She highlights:

“Denying our feelings can be detrimental to our overall health and pent-up emotions tend to fester and stimulate our left-brain stress response, making it impossible for us to relax and find peace.”

She explains:

“Although a rational cognitive left-brain C1 that values its self-control is a beautiful thing, when we train ourselves to ignore our emotions, or disregard what we feel as not valid, like a drain pipe that can get clogged up, those emotions will seep out one way or another. When the emotional pain of our C2 is not listened or validated, it has the power to manifest as physical disease. As a result, it is our emotional C2 that often holds the key to our physical and mental well-being.”

The Key To Our Peace

So our health actually depends on our ability to nurture, understand and support our C2.

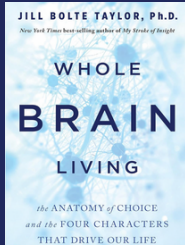
By gaining our left brain and our ability to conceptualize a past, a present and a future, we have gained a new kind of consciousness that drives our ability to manifest order in the world. Because of that, she reminds us that we owe a lot to our C2!

“Our C2 sacrificed its own peace of heart so we could evolve.”

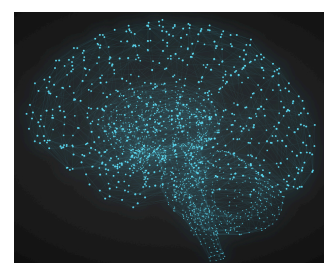
Indeed, only by acknowledging the future, can one come face to face with their own mortality, as well as the risks of illness or pain.

“It is this audacious C2 who faces our deepest fears and sounds our alarm for danger in the only way it knows how. It wails, it whines, it cheats, it schemes, it self-loathes, it gets jealous, it gets angry, it feels guilt and shame, and it acts out in a million antisocial ways to get our attention.”

And it's important to remember that our emotional cell tissue never matures, which is why adults too can experience temper tantrums. It's part of the deal.



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Our emotional brains are ready to support us by the time we are born. That's how we get to communicate our needs and survive for the first years of our journey on Earth. Our thinking cells however will take years to interconnect!

By design our C2s lead us to narrow our focus. It is also wired in a way that prompts us toward discontentment and suffering. She reminds us:

“Living life with a suspicious and discontented C2 is one of the prices we pay to have a consciousness that is capable of focusing on the external world.”

But our C2 are not bad! They enable us to feel ALL our deepest and most profound emotions. They are artful in manufacturing the most pleasurable, as well as the most uncomfortable emotions. We can choose to celebrate whatever we are feeling by remembering what an achievement it is in itself. Our way out is to acknowledge our suffering and to remember that we are not it! We are only the one feeling it.

And so our left brain is the source of our happiness. Just like it is the source of our suffering. But our right brain is the source of our joy.

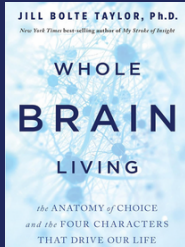
“As many have observed, joy is cultivated from within. It comes when we make peace with who we are, why we are, and how we are, whereas happiness is contingent on external things, people, places, thoughts, and events.”

Our author highlights:

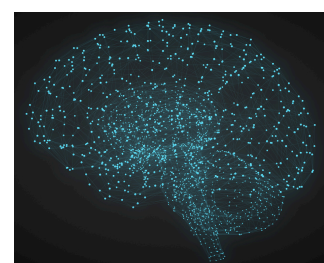
“Once C2 has stormed into our psyche, getting into another character requires a plan.”

Our job is to master how to get that character supported by the three others and to make sure that it is instantaneously led under control when triggered, so that we don't fall prey to some unhelpful emotional reactivity.

Jill Bolte Taylor never recovered the data that her C2 had stored pre-stroke. Which means that any memories she now recalls from her first 37 years are void of any attached emotion (be it positive or uncomfortable ones).



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But her C2 still recovered which means she can experience all those emotions now. However she had to relearn how to label and understand each of them with the help of her loved ones. And that's how she could witness how unhealthy unprocessed emotions felt within her body and how she realized that we have the ability to shut down those circuits at will—notably thanks to the BRAIN Huddle.

C1 in the World

“At its worst, this part of our brain is emotionally reactive to the external world and does not accept responsibility for its behavior. It is also inclined to sacrifice its future, as it is blinded by the pain from its past.”

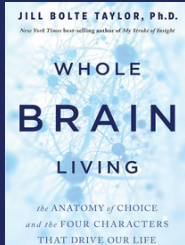
Our C2 can fuel our scarcity mindset and lead us to feel both discontent and insatiable. They're probably on whenever we're feeling unappreciated, undervalued, unwanted, unworthy, pressed, victimized or remotely envious. And we can recognize anyone's C2 when they act in a belligerent, shameful, sarcastic, provocative or vengeful way. This part of our brain can be emotionally manipulative, arrogant, selfish, narcissistic, grandiose and self-righteous. Our author adds:

“On a bad day, this part of our brain enthusiastically belittles others, goes on the attack with abusive name-calling, and spars with a tit-for-tat mentality. It can be critical, intolerant of racial or religious differences, spiteful, mean, or even cruel. And Lord help us all, but this part of our brain is not able to take any responsibility for anything. With a superficial charm, it will love you conditionally, but only for as long as you are letting it control you and you are feeding its needs.”

So our C2 is definitely not our highest self. It can lie and deceive, deflect blame and tends to lead us towards immature behaviors. BUT the key is to realize that all of this stems from pain and fear. And so the invitation (and solution) is for us to lean in and use our other three characters to listen and nurture it, so that our C2 can know that it is valuable, safe and cared for.

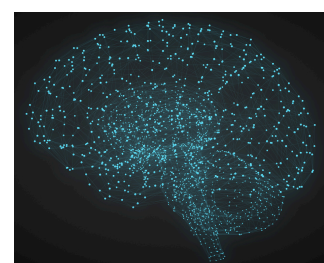
C1 at Work and Play

C2 does not trust other people's intentions or motivations. They drive a leadership style built on hard demands, threats and an iron fist. And they can struggle to make rational decisions in the heat of the moment.



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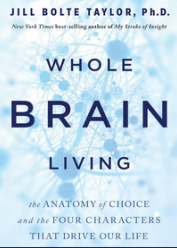


“Although it sounds somewhat familiar to the leadership style of the Hard Character 1, who leads as though the sky will fall IF we fail, our C2 leads as though the sky IS falling.”

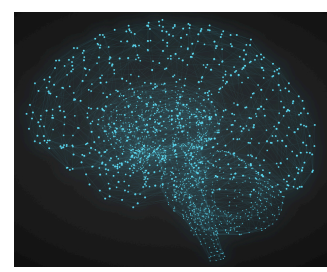
And of course, they're good at running a perfectly good beach day by reviewing all the worst case scenarios available to a worried mind.

A Snapshot Of Your C2

*“ [Resorts to] Anger/Name-Calling
Deceives
Feels guilty
Internalizes shame
Loves conditionally
Negative Self-Judgment
Anxious
Whines
Egocentric
Blames”*



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Getting to know your Character 2

Please refer to the books for guidance in answering the following prompts, meant to help you deep your relationship with your C2.

- *“Do you recognize your C2? Pause for a moment and imagine yourself engaging in C2 behaviors. Picture yourself feeling resentment or jealousy, or whatever your core issues are. A lot of different emotions are masked as anger. Do you have strategies to calm this circuitry, or does your C2 tend to seep out into your life into unloving ways?”*
- *“What does C2 feel like inside your body? Do you feel anger, anxiety, panic very often? How do you hold your body or change your voice when C2 comes online? What does that upset feel like inside of your body?”*
- *“Assuming you can identify your left-brain emotional C2, do you value this character, or does this part of your brain scare you? How much of the time do you let this character run your life, and under what circumstances?”*
- *“As you think about your Left Emotional C2, can you assign it an appropriate name?”*
- *“Who are some of the C2s over the course of your life who have influenced you, in positive or negative ways? Were you emboldened by those encounters or repressed by them?”*
- *“Who in your life appreciates, cared for, identifies with, and wants to hang out with your C2? What are those relationships like?”*
- *“Who in your life does not get along with your C2?”*
- *“What kind of parent, partner or friend is your C2?”*
- *“What is the relationship like inside your head between your C2 and your other characters? Does your C2 respect and value your other characters, or does it relish disagreeing with and antagonizing them?”*