

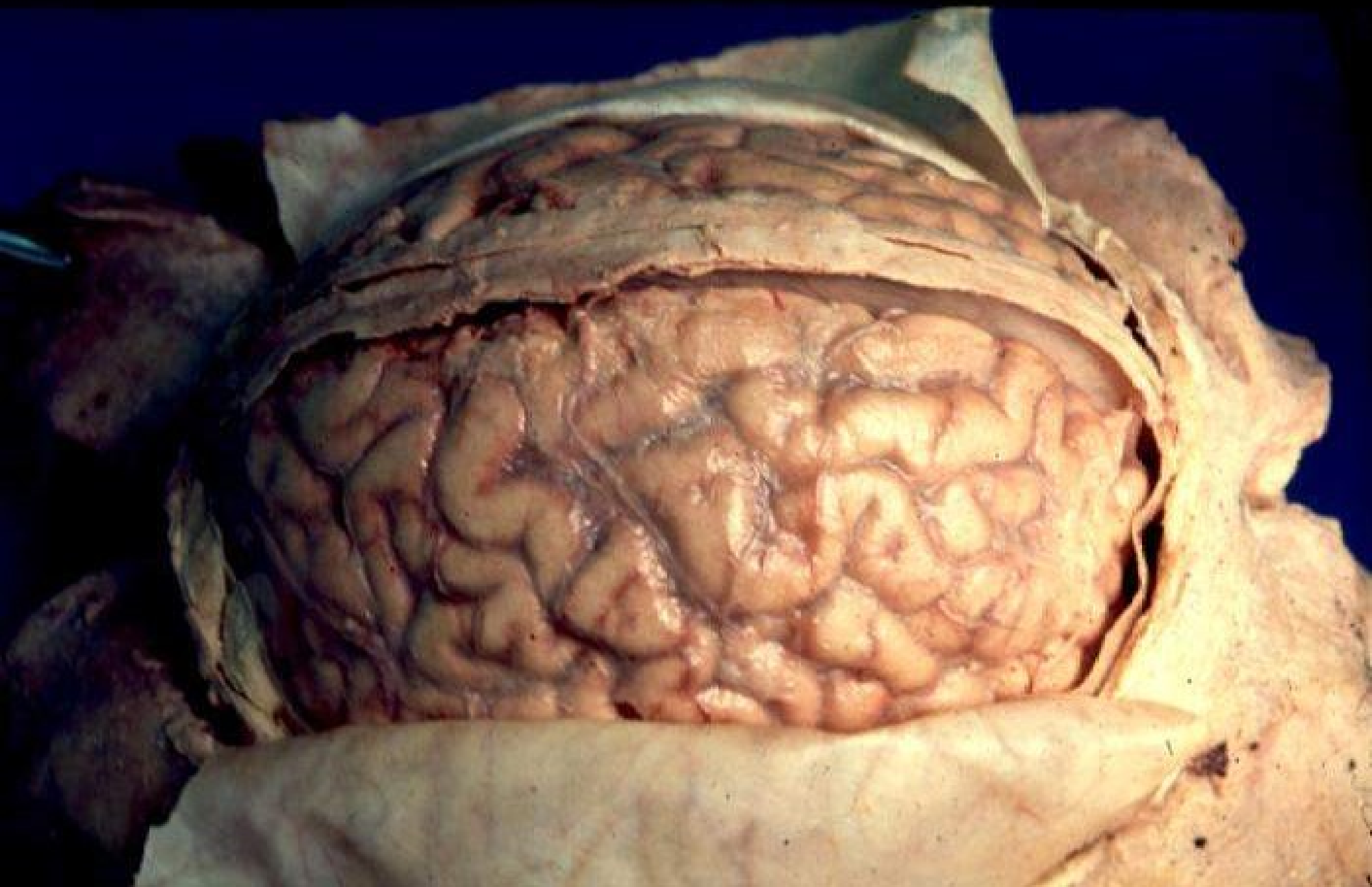
Green Zone Brain, Green Zone World: Two Keys for the Human Tribe In the 21st Century



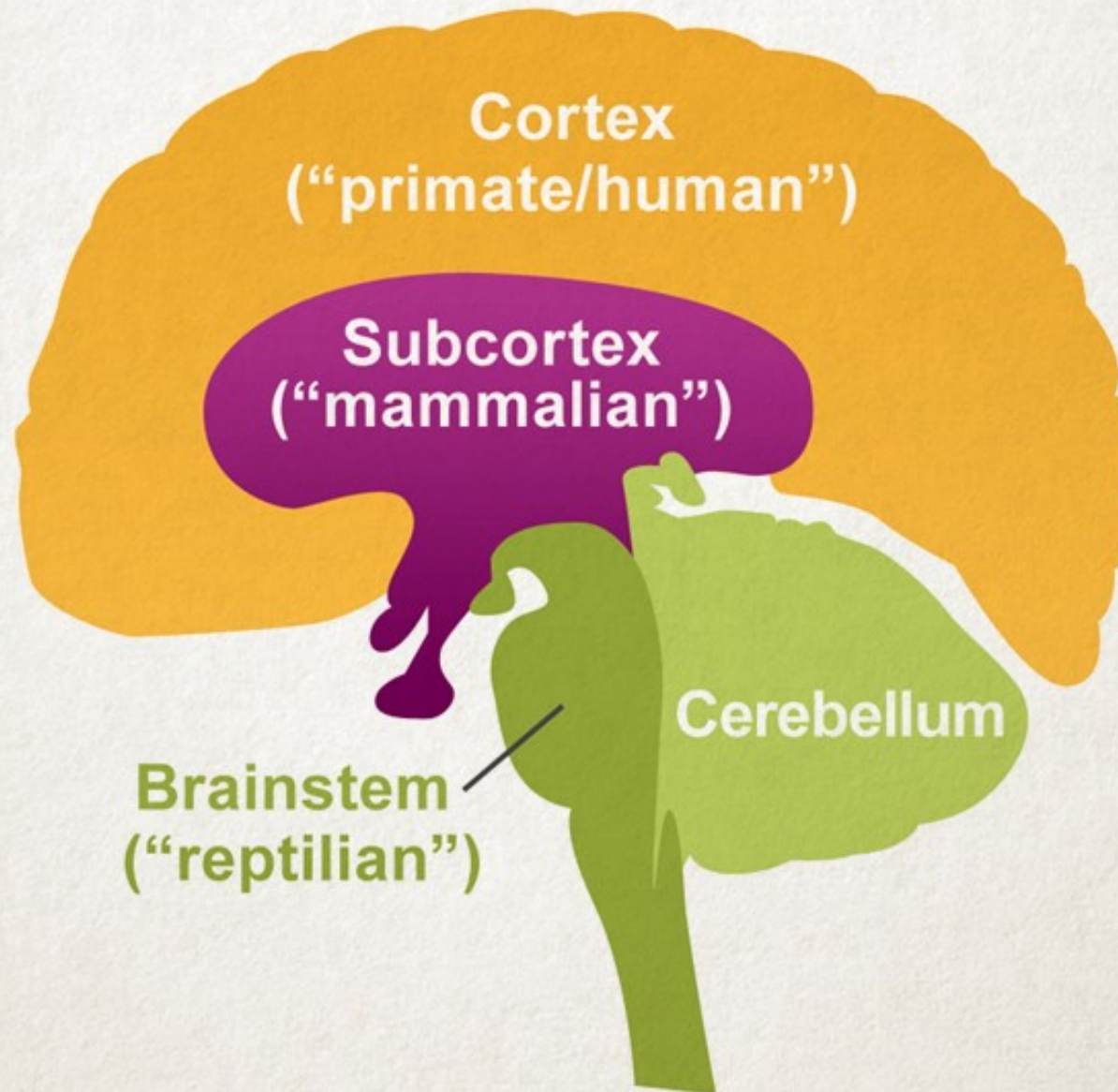
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The Challenge



The Evolving Brain





Velcro for Bad, Teflon for Good

The negativity bias

bad experiences

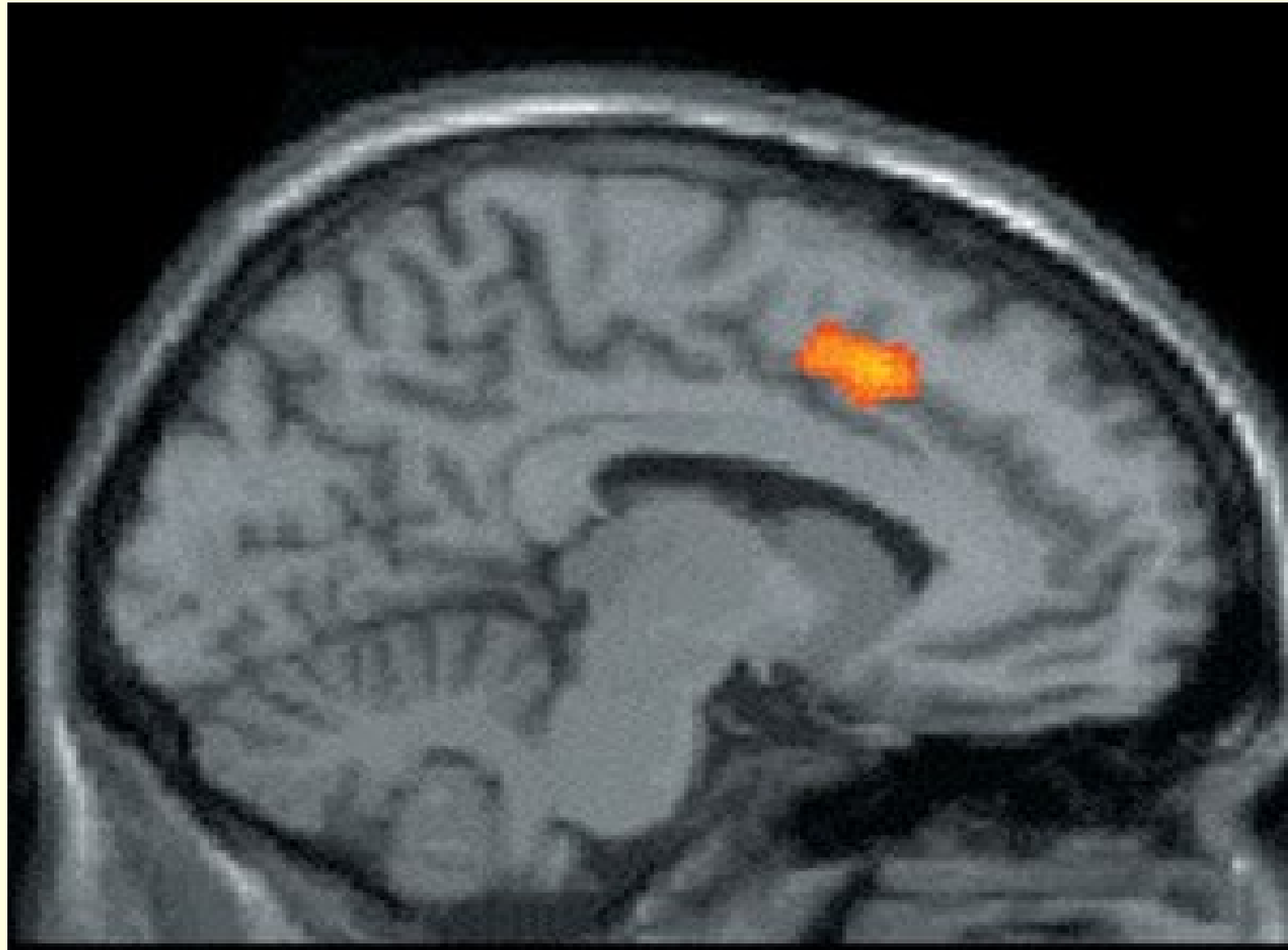
good experiences

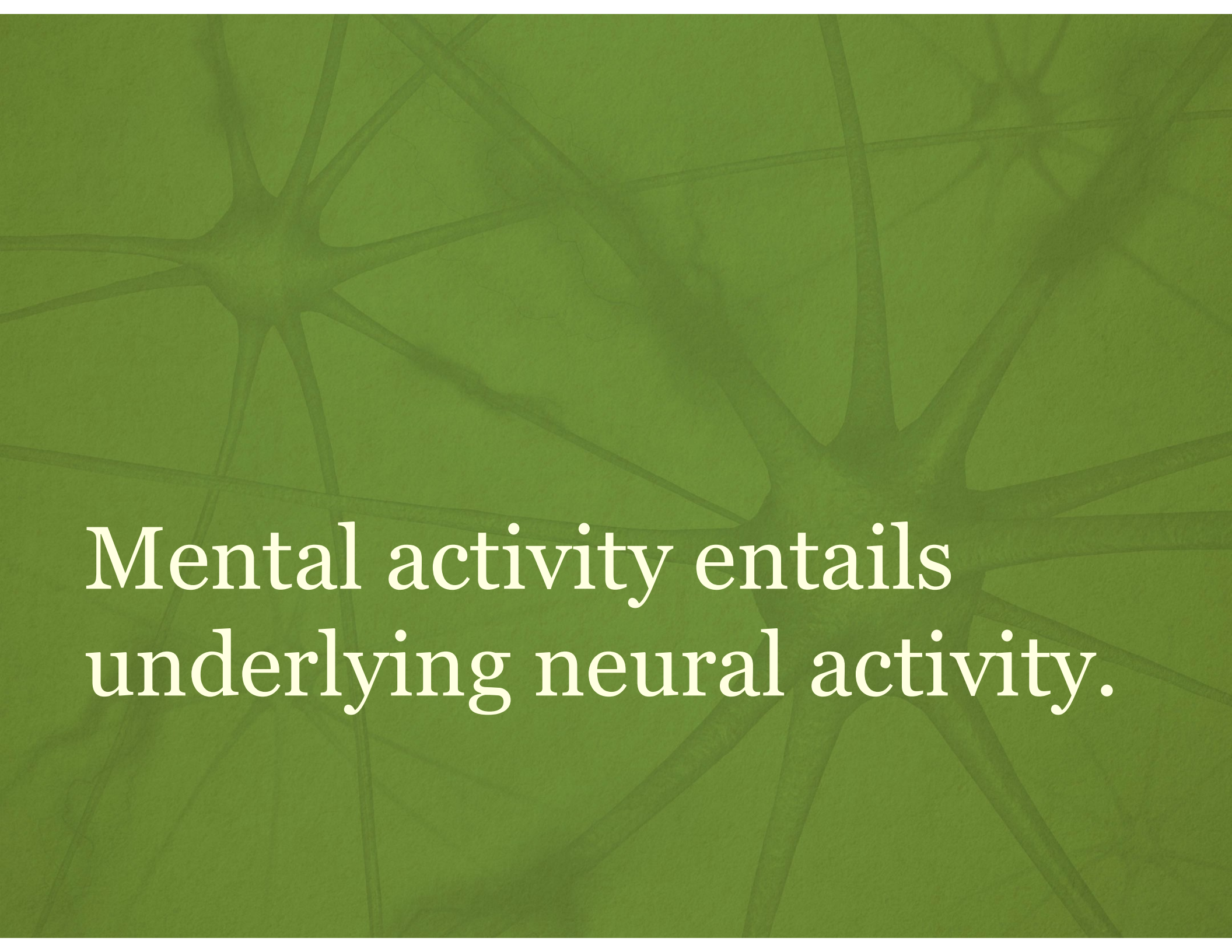
Stone age brains in the 21st century



The Opportunity

Ardent, Diligent, Resolute, and Mindful



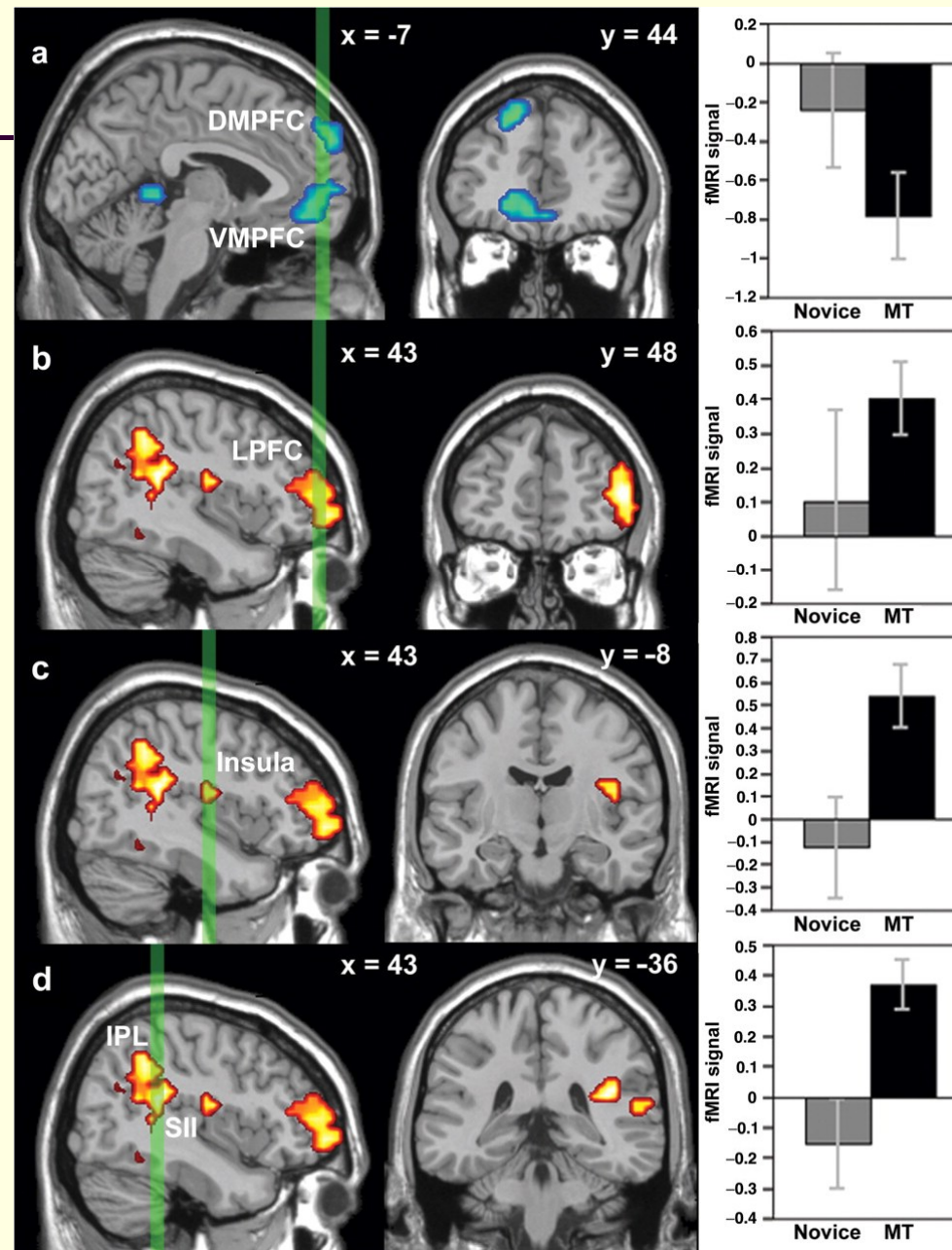
The background of the slide is a solid green color with a faint, stylized pattern of neurons. The neurons are depicted with dark green, branching processes (dendrites and axons) radiating from central cell bodies, creating a network-like structure across the entire frame.

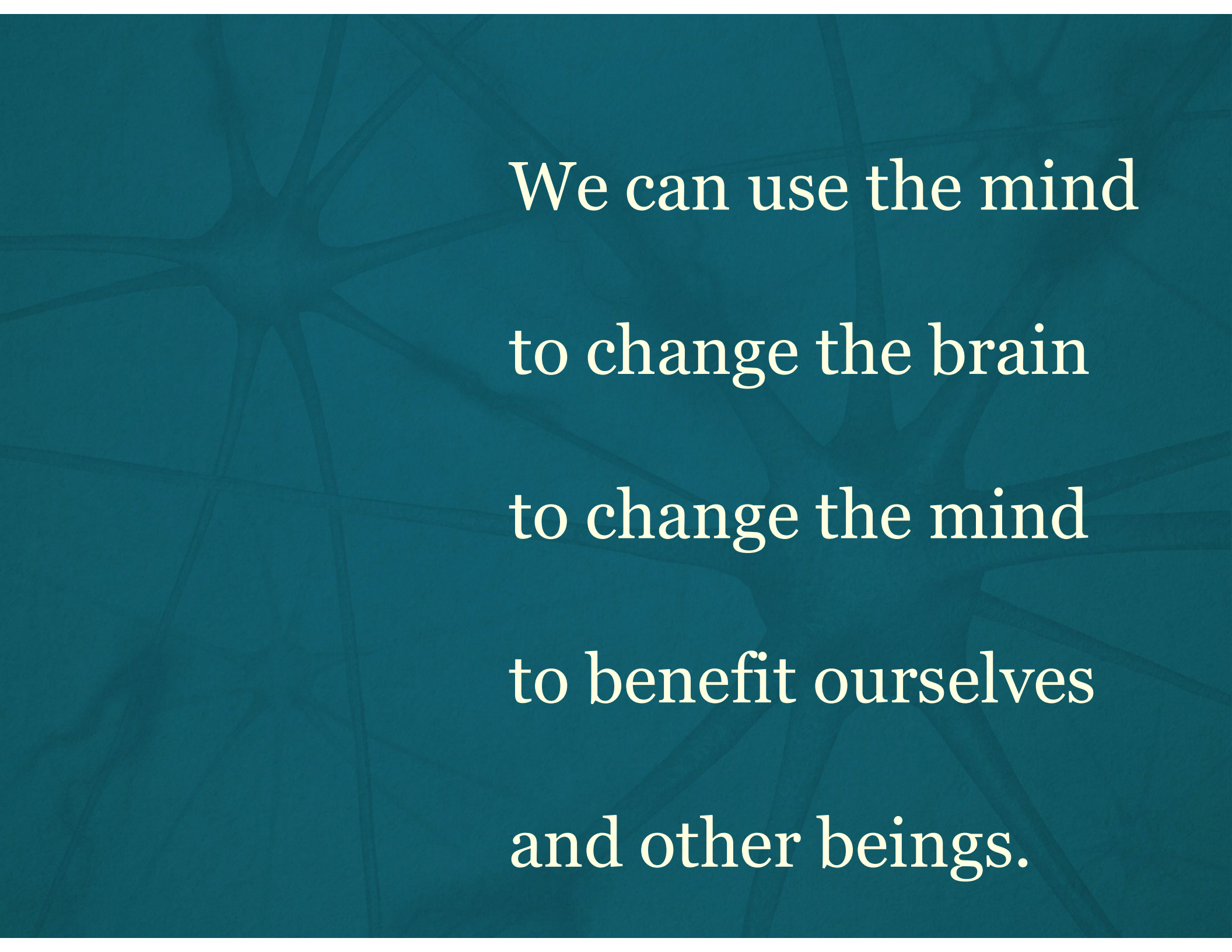
Mental activity entails
underlying neural activity.

Repeated mental activity
entails repeated neural activity.

Repeated neural activity
builds neural structure.

Self-Focused (blue) vs Open Awareness (red) Conditions (following 8 weeks of MT)





We can use the mind
to change the brain
to change the mind
to benefit ourselves
and other beings.

Two Wolves in the Heart



Green Zone Brain, Red Zone Brain

Meeting Our Fundamental Needs



Safety

**Avoid
Harms**



Satisfaction

**Approach
Rewards**



Connection

**Attach
to Others**

Needs Feel Met: **Responsive** Mode



When we feel basically **safe** – not disturbed by **threat** – the Avoiding system goes Responsive, with a sense of **peace**.



When we feel basically **satisfied** – not disturbed by **loss** – the Approaching system goes Responsive, with a sense of **contentment**.



When we feel basically **connected** – not disturbed by **rejection** – the Attaching system goes Responsive, with a sense of **love**.

The Responsive Mode is Home Base

In the **Responsive** “**green zone**,” the body defaults to a sustainable equilibrium of refueling, repairing and recovering.

The mind defaults to a sustainable equilibrium of:

Avoiding

Peace

Approaching

Contentment

Attaching

Love

This is the brain in its homeostatic ***Responsive***,
minimal craving mode.

Needs Don't Feel Met: **Reactive** Mode



When we feel **unsafe** –
disturbed by **threat** – the
Avoiding system
goes Reactive,
with a sense
of **fear**.



When we feel **dissatisfied** –
disturbed by **loss** –
the Approaching
system goes
Reactive, with
a sense of
frustration.



When we feel **disconnected** –
disturbed by **rejection** – the
Attaching system
goes Reactive,
with a sense
of **heartache**.

The Reactive Mode is Leaving Home

In the **Reactive “red zone,”** the body fires up into the stress response: fight, flight, or freeze; outputs usually exceed inputs; long-term building projects are deferred.

The mind fires up into:

Avoiding

Fear

Approaching

Frustration

Attaching

Heartache

This is the brain in its allostatic ***Reactive, craving*** mode.

Coming Home, Staying Home

Meeting your core needs brings you home to the **Responsive** “green zone.”

Taking in the good Responsive states grows Responsive traits. In a wonderful cycle, these traits promote good states – which can strengthen your Responsive traits.

Responsive states and traits help you stay Responsive when the world is flashing red.





Can you stay in the
Green Zone when:

Things are pleasant?

Things are unpleasant?

Things are relational?

#1: When There Really Is Enough

For millions of years, our ancestors were routinely unable to meet their fundamental needs.

But in the last generation or so, it has become possible to assure that every human being has the conditions for a mainly “green zone” life.

How our species comes to terms with this possibility could be the defining story of the next few centuries.

Repeatedly taking in experiences of safety, satisfaction, and connection

develops an increasingly unconditional core sense of fullness and balance, rather than deficit and disturbance.

For individuals, this is the foundation of resilient happiness.

For groups and countries,
they could become less vulnerable
to the classic manipulations of
fear and anger,
greed and possessiveness,
and “us” against “them” conflicts.



#2: Healthy Governance Of the Human Tribe

During evolution

- mammal,
- primate,
- hominid,
- human,

the adaptive benefits
of social capabilities

were a primary driver of the
development of the brain.

Until very recently, our human, hominid, and primate ancestors lived mostly in hunter-gatherer groups averaging about 30 adults –

breeding mainly internally while competing with other groups for scarce resources.

As the brain tripled in volume
over the past several million years,
it's said that
the primary adaptation
of hominid and human evolution
is to group living.

Good teamwork, decision-making, leadership, conflict resolution, and distribution of resources – “governance” –

was critically important to individual survival and to the survival of others who carried one's genes.

We are adapted to
optimal governance
for the common good
under three conditions
in hunter-gatherer settings:

Common truth

Common welfare

Common justice

Under these conditions,

competitions, conflicts,
injustices, and harms
still occur,

but inequalities of wealth
and power are constrained.

But since agriculture, etc.
~ 10,000 years ago,

the accumulation of surpluses
enabled greater concentrations
and thus inequalities
of wealth and power.

These recent changes have undone the enabling conditions of healthy human governance.

With few exceptions, in city-states, empires, aristocracies, and modern industrial democracies:

Truth is not shared in common.

Welfare is not shared in common.

Justice is not shared in common.



What can we do?

The Beginning of a Few Suggestions

Highlight unshared, not common truth, welfare, and justice.

Protect common truth; foundational.

In groups – families, organizations, civil society – commit to the principles of common truth, welfare, justice; explore governance in light of these principles; call out violations of them.

The Global Commons

Knowledge is increasingly distributed and democratized – which could foster the same for wealth and power.

What might happen if groups of 20-50 people formed online across conventional boundaries, banding together to share resources for the personal and global good – and allying with other similar groups?

In the small bands of our ancestors,
the many could speak up and stand up
to the few.

These days our campfires look like
Facebook, Twitter, blog posts, town
hall meetings, and the public square.

Gathering around them, we can speak
up and stand up for the truth, for the
general welfare, and for justice.

”

*Keep a green bough
in your heart,
and a singing bird
will come.*

Lao Tzu

