

## LESSON 22

# Why our “Lizard Brain” Has us Wired for Protection, Not Reason



**H**UMANS ARE WIRED FOR PROTECTION. This wiring is one major reason our species has survived, and eventually has thrived, over the centuries prior to and since the Cognitive Revolution of 70,000 years ago.

**THE WHY** — To keep us from danger, *threats are detected immediately by the amygdala*, an almond-like structure in our prehistoric or “**lizard brain**.” The amygdala almost instantaneously begins a cascade of neurotransmitters and substances (epinephrine, norepinephrine, cortisol, ACTH, et al) from the sympathetic portion of the autonomic nervous system that result in the “**fight or flight**” response very quickly being activated. This was hugely important when humans were threatened by predators or other humans.

Our “**thinking brain**” or prefrontal cortex (beneath the forehead), which appeared on the scene approximately 70,000 years ago and gives Homo Sapiens the ability to reflect and reason, can override the fight or flight response generated by the amygdala, but it is *much slower-acting*. There would be no reason to reflect and consider the pros and cons of a threat or a situation if one did not survive, hence this arrangement has worked well in the past when threats to survival were real.

### Threats and Reason

Threats and threat responses come first, and then reason eventually shows up, but reason and solutions are inhibited if the stress is still present even if the cause of the stress is no longer present. This is what happens with chronic stress. We simply react without thought. *We just can't reason optimally*. We need to do something about this conundrum. And we will.

We no longer face threats and physical danger to our survival. However, the multitude of **first world problems** from money, work, family, media overload, and political unrest amongst others still *create a stress reaction* within us. Result: We feel stressed, have migraines, and don't enjoy life as we should.

This stress reaction inhibits one's ability to create a proper assessment, reflection, and strategy for dealing with the issue and with the stress. *It is impossible to be creative and reactive at the same time*. Again, not bad in the old days, but problematic in 2020 (and likely even more problematic going forward).

It was also hugely important for our ancestors to recover from these periods of stress. The autonomic nervous

system has two divisions: **1)** the *sympathetic division* which generally prepares the body for stressful or emergency situations, i.e., fight or flight, and **2)** the *parasympathetic division* (PNS) which controls body processes during ordinary situations and is responsible for recovery, rest, and relaxation.

*These two systems should be fairly balanced*, but the overwhelming input from present society creates a **reactive overload imbalance** where one is **continually under sympathetic “fight or flight” stimulation** with precious little time to rest and activate the parasympathetic nervous system so recovery can take place.

The *MyRelaxer* Feel Better Lessons are directed to enhancing parasympathetic nervous system activation so that there is more of a sympathetic/parasympathetic balance. Add the *MyRelaxer* relaxation stretches and the PNS is enhanced even more.

## RESULTS

**More relaxed. Less stressed.  
Feeling Better. Being Better.**

### The Four Pillars of Well-Being (review)

We have stressed that the “Four Pillars of Well-Being,” Better Sleep, Better Attitude, Better Movement, and Better Eating (“Better Habits”) will limit the stressors that *poor sleep, poor attitude, poor movement, and poor eating habits* cause.

The Four Pillars work together with a “multiplier effect” that dramatically enhances the results of your efforts. The more you embrace one, the more the other is enjoyable, and the even better you feel.

- Sleeping well makes everything feel good, right?
- Having a good attitude will, by definition, makes you feel great.
- Moving during the day, especially outside, gives us all a lift.
- Eating the right foods at the right times (“Eating to Feel Better”) will help your “gut buddies” send positive neurotransmitters to your brain. Feeling better is good.
- Bonus Fifth Pillar: Daily routine *MyRelaxer* One-Minute Relaxation Stretches.

But, pursuing them all together works magic: A good attitude begets good sleep which causes you to feel more energetic and move more.

Good sleep promotes a good attitude which encourages healthy eating which results in your intestinal biome (“gut buddies”) sending calming messages to your brain.

Good Food = Good Mood.

The combination of the “*Four Pillars of Well-Being*” has a “**multiplier effect.**” We will show you how to get there simply, time-efficiently, and effectively.

The *Better Habits* also promote *parasympathetic activation* to calm us so we can rest, repair, revive, and restore ourselves. Two win-wins for the Better Habits.

*One cannot be stressed and relaxed at the same time.* Impossible. To relax and reduce the effects of stress, one must engage the parasympathetic nervous system. Our goal: Relax ourselves.

Simply, this parasympathetic activation provided by the *MyRelaxer* Method (Lessons + *MyRelaxer* 3X/day) will relax you and diminish the effects of stress. It will also promote better short- and long-term well-being and generally provide an opportunity to *enjoy life rather than being continually stressed about it.*



### JOY'S PEARL

There is no silver bullet for feeling better. Practicing the Four Pillars of Well-being will limit the stressors AND create parasympathetic activation... your new best friend.