2022 New Mexico Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement:

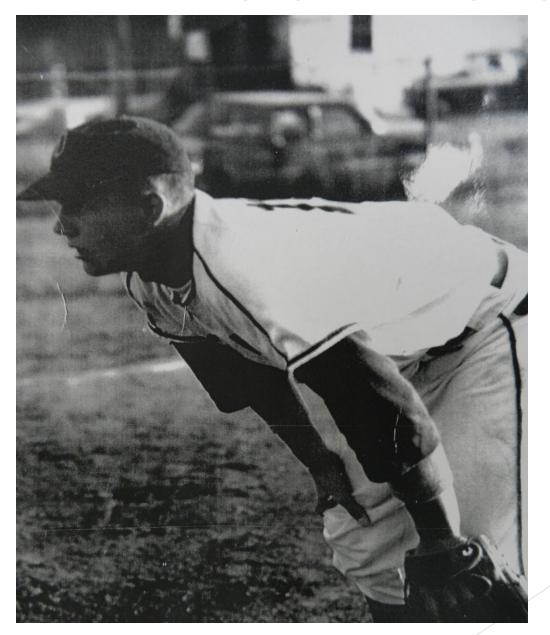
The Biology of the Brain Injury Recovery Process

By Ken Collins, CPSW
Executive Director
Hozho Center for Personal Enhancement

"Managing Stress and Anxiety"
Why Controlling the
Limbic System

Fight, Flight or Freeze Response is Important to People with Brain Injuries

1966 Freshman Year Oakridge High School, Oakridge, Oregon



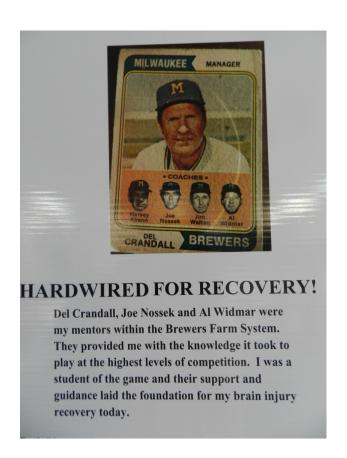
A box of memories helped me re-discover who I was before my injury. It took discipline to go through the box of memories every day. It takes discipline, focus and practice. Lucky for me all of my life's memories are positive and empowering, so I have a positive mindset where anything is possible if we do the work necessary to heal and believe in ourselves. This is the new box of memories today. This box reminds me of where I have been and how far I have come in my recovery. Finding a sense of purpose and meaning plays a critical role in being passionate about what we do enables us to improve our condition and heal.



Boyhood Dream Come True
Anything Is Possible
If You Work Hard Enough
To Make It Happen
And
Have The Will To Never Give Up



Hardwired for Recovery



Introduction to Stress Triggering The Limbic System Fight or Flight Response

STANFORD UNIVERSITY STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-5020

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

1 July, 1987

Mr. Ken Collins 31212 Camas Lane Eugene, Or.

Dear Mr. Collins,

Thank you for your call of today. I've enclosed two reprints -one summarizing the work I do with wild baboons, one with the related laboratory work on the role of stress in damaging brain cells.
I hope these will be of some help.

Sincerely,

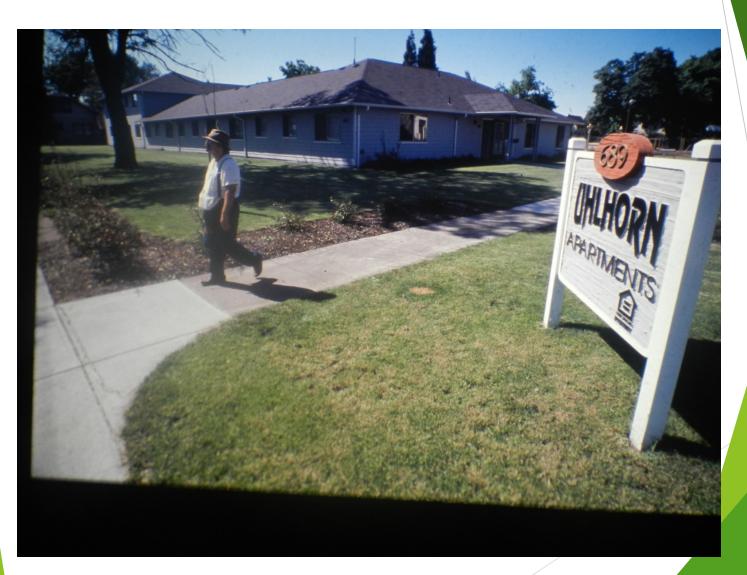
Robert Sapolsky

Assistant Professor

Biology, Stanford University

Neuroscience, Stanford Medical School

My VISTA Project - The Uhlhorn Apartments
in Eugene, Oregon.
First independent living program for people with brain injuries
in America.



Before the stove top can be turned on a timer needs to be set for the stove to work.



Timers and open cupboards reduce stress and increase safety



River Kourt Apartments helps people with brain injuries transition from the Uhlhorn Apartments program to more independent living



Limbic System Fight or Flight Response

The limbic system is the command-and-control centre for a considerable part of the hormonal and autonomic nervous responses through out the body. The limbic system is a collection of glands situated in the lower centre of the brain below the cortex and above the brain stem, either side of the thalamus. It comprises of the Hypothalamus, Amygdale, Cingulated Gyros, Fornix, Hippocampus, Hypothesis and the Olfactory Cortex. These limbic system structures are involved in many of our emotions and motivations, particularly those that are related to survival.

The fight-flight, automatic emotional memory response takes place in the amygdale. This gland responds to sensory stimulation and retrieves memory responses to similar situations being perceived, saving the time and bother to figure out how to react to the situation or stimulation. This response happens in the moment when a person senses a threat. The reaction is instant and automatic, whereas it takes a little longer for the thinking part of the brain (the cortex) to process the situation and evaluate whether the threat is real, and if so, how to handle it.

If the cortex sends the all-clear signal, the fight-flight response is deactivated and the nervous system can relax, however, when the cortex, the logical thinking mind, is unable to send the all-clear signal, or the all-clear signal is ignored, overridden by the automatic amygdale response, then a situation of uncontrolled anxiety or stress can go beyond the conscious control of the individual. When this happens on a regular basis, over a long period of time, the mind - body connection forms an almost permanent anxiety response and stimulating an adrenal overload, often in situations which do not require such a response.

This whole process in western terminology, takes place in the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous pathways which lead from the limbic centre to the organ systems needed to react to the stimulation such as, the heart, the adrenals or the liver. To counteract the stimulation of the sympathetic pathway to the response, the parasympathetic is stimulated, which then, switches off the response.

There can be times of over stimulation of the sympathetic pathways which lead to a chronic situation where the parasympathetic can no longer offer an adequate control response. And the whole system turns from being a survival technique to a possible causative factor in illness. Acupuncture has the incredible ability to help regulate the parasympathetic nervous pathways of the "fight and flight response", to regain a sense of balance and harmony within the limbic glandular systems.

Franklin Institute: Stress Depletes Brain Chemicals
If a threat is especially severe or recurs frequently, such as protracted combat or living with abuse, the chemicals that carry messages from one nerve cell to another become depleted, and the brain becomes sluggish and inefficient. According to the <u>American Institute of Stress</u>, this can lead to a variety of mental health effects, including: (3)

- **Depression**
- **▶** Sleep disturbances
- ► Racing thoughts and difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty learning
- **►** Absent-mindedness
- Difficulty making decisions
- **▶** Obsessive or compulsive behaviors
- ► Increased hostility, worry and guilt

10 Surprising Things That Trigger Fight or Flight by Dr. Lissa Rankin

- Feelings of loneliness
- Hunger
- Selling your soul for a paycheck
- A pessimistic world view
- Toxic relationships
- Worry wart thoughts
- Childhood trauma
- Unforgiven resentments
- Anger
- Feelings of helplessness

- The loss of your old self (how you used to be) and the grief from what has happened to you (that many of us can't remember) must be dealt with first.
- A good grief counselor will help you understand how this loss affects you and what to do about it. This will help reduce stress and anxiety by giving you a better understanding about what is going on between your ears instead of just reacting to it.
- Find purpose and meaning in your life again because having a sense of purpose and meaning will give you the passion to live again and make it easier to get out of bed in the morning.
- Finding something to live for will relieve stress and anxiety because you will start feeling better about yourself, improve your self-confidence, increase your independence and feelings of accomplishment and self-worth. This will also help motivate you and the neuroplasticity it takes to heal your brain.(1)
- Use it or lose it!
- This will also help you become more pro-active and help to manage the stress that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response (2) instead of reacting to it.
- Under stress energy (Glucose) is diverted to our muscles which impairs our memory (Hippocampus) and problem solving abilities (3).

- Get a Key Holder and put it by your door to put your keys when you come home. Do this every night so you won't have to look for your keys in the morning. Starting your day off on the right foot will make your day easier and help to relieve stress and anxiety that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response.
- Grudges and resentment will only hold you back. They will be an anchor and hold you back from being able to move on and achieve your potential.
- Lighten up on yourself. Your family and friends want to help they just don't know how.
- Worry less and smile more. Be content with what you have because there are others how have it much worse than you. Be glad to be alive!
- Find ways to stay active and less isolated because this will build Neuroplasticity and new Neuro-pathways to heal your brain. (4)
- Stop the negative self-talk before it gets started.
- Once those negative thoughts in your head start running they are hard to stop.

- Don't give up Embrace Adversity!
- Have adversity give you the will and resolve to get better and improve your quality of life.
- This will be up to you and no one else!
- Make the best of everyday Adapt, Improvise, Overcome, Move on.
- ▶ Get plenty of exercise, lots of rest and slow down so you can reduce the stress and anxiety that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response.
- Family members and friends will be there to help but all the work will be yours and no one else. This won't be easy, and you will be challenged all the time because of memory, anger, processing and problem-solving issues.
- Stress and anxiety triggers the limbic system fight or flight response that cause these issues after your brain injury.
- Make a "To Do List" to help you stay organized. An iPad, iPhone and other smart phones have GPS, alarms and calendars that will work wonders for you.
- These tools will help you stay organized, feel good about yourself again and increase your independence and empowerment.
- Making a list before you go shopping will also save you money by cutting down on impulse buying. It will also help you become more responsible and less dependent on others. Being less dependent on others improves your self-confidence and sense of accomplishment which reduces stress and anxiety.
- **Be** around supportive people who encourage you and want you to succeed.
- Learn about and practice mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques.
- Yoga, Tai Chi, meditation, music and dance are effective ways to increase your wellbeing and find balance and harmony in your life after a brain injury.

- Many times, we try to do too many things at once and feel like nothing gets done.
- Make a list and check things off when you complete them so you can stay on task, be organized and see what you have accomplished.
- ▶ This will save time, reduce stress and anxiety and build your self-confidence.
- Sleeping on an issue or a concern can be the best way to help you figure it out a solution. Getting enough rest will give you valuable energy to think better and problem solve difficult situations. Take naps when you need too.
- Take "ownership" of your recovery process and get rid of the word "can't" in your vocabulary. Nothing is impossible when you believe in yourself!
- Get off the "Pity Pot"!
- Life will get easier over time be patient and don't sweat the little things because they will only hold you back and make your recovery harder!
- Get out of your head and into the outside world. Our brains heal with Neuroplasticity when we are active instead of waiting for our lives to change.
- Thinking too much about a problem or issues triggers Amygdala Hijack. These survival instincts are very strong and makes processing information and memory difficult. Anger, anxiety and depression are consequences of the limbic system fight or flight response. When stress becomes chronic this keeps the limbic system fight or flight response in control and our lives after brain injury in turmoil.

- Set up a routine and stick to it.
- A routine will help to relieve stress and anxiety and make it easier for you to follow through with what you have planned. This will also help create "familiarity" to help relieve stress and anxiety.
- By doing the same thing every day you will start building trust in yourself again and this will increase hope for a better day.
- With HOPE anything is possible.
- Life is hard for most people.
- Life after a brain injury is hard but not impossible.
- Life will get easier over time be patient.
- Make the best of everyday and don't give up!
- Be content with yourself and don't try to live up to other people's expectations of you and who you are.
- Most importantly don't set unrealistic goals for yourself because this will add the stress and anxiety that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response.
- Don't depend on others to remind you. Self-confidence is a learning process. Learn from your mistakes and move on.
- Ask for help when you need it and don't assume people know what you want.
- Be grateful for what you have and build on those assets to improve your skills and abilities.

- Eat healthy foods and get lots of exercise and rest. This will help you get the energy you need to get the blood/oxygen circulating to your brain for better problem solving and decision making. This also increase Neuroplasticity and new brain cell growth.
- Find ways to relax that aren't counterproductive to your wellbeing.
- Abusing alcohol and drugs to "relax or cope" might have worked before your injury but it won't work now because alcohol and drug addiction is part of the limbic system. Your life is already hard enough don't make it harder than it has to be. (5)
- Mindfulness meditation, long walks, Yoga and Tai Chi and other relaxation techniques make anger management, processing, problem solving and decision making easier because this will relieve stress and anxiety that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response. (6)
- ► Take one day at a time don't run before you can walk. Recovery is a marathon -not- a sprint!
- ▶ Enjoy what life has to offer and take pride in all your accomplishments!
- Every accomplishment is a victory no matter how small.
- Every day is a new day and learn from yesterday's lessons/experiences.
- Be good to yourself because you are the only thing that is important!
- Don't put up negative barriers for you to overcome.
- Plan your day and stay cool, calm and collected as much as possible BRFATH.

- Be careful of who you call "friends" because this will set the stage for how you act around other people and how those people react to you.
- Be around positive people and people who care about your wellbeing.
- Nothing is more depressing than listening to someone always complain about their life and what is wrong in the world.
- Friends who judge others and criticize you aren't friends.
- Don't take criticism personally because constructive criticism can make you a better person in the long run.
- Remember that your family and friends want to help but sometimes they don't know how. Don't hold grudges because of this.
- It's human nature that when people don't understand things, they criticize them. Don't take this personal!
- Many people don't understand what you are going through so don't hold them responsible for this.
- Your actions will dictate what people think about you.
- Being consumed by the "old you" and "new you" triggers stress and interfere with the brain injury recovery process.
- There is now silver bullet or magic pill to speed up the recovery process, so relax and stay calm as much as possible.

- Pay attention to what is happening around you and plan ahead.
- Become an active listener.
- Hearing what people have to say is more important than listening to what they say.
- Watch their body language because when you get distracted it is harder to understand what a person is saying or asking you.
- Ask questions when you don't understand something.
- Stay relaxed and concentrate on what they are saying or asking.
- Be in the moment and stay focused. Take deep breaths because nothing works better than getting blood filled oxygen to your brain. This will also relieve the stress and anxiety that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response. (6)
- Mindfulness-based stress reduction can be used to help you control stress and anxiety that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response. (7)
- ▶ Participate in a Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Program. (7)
- Exercise a lot , eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest!
- Be good to yourself and don't take life so seriously. Don't let the little things get you down because when you think about them long enough they will become bigger than they really are!

Stress Reduction Using: Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT Tapping) Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Mindfulness Meditation Training

When I arrived home on Wednesday June 20, 2012, I saw that my vacuum cleaner was outside my traile in the driveway. Thinking one of my dogs might have drug it out of my trailer I opened my gate and walked over to pick it up and move it so I could drive in and park my 4 Runner.

As I rounded the corner of my trailer, I saw that my front door was open and my window in front of the trailer was broken. As I walked toward my front door and got closer, I recognized a neighbor sitting at the door cross legged and holding a large steak knife in each hand. When I approached him, I ask him what he was doing there, and he looked up and said, "You are going to die". I stepped back and asked him again what he was doing there, and he said again "You are going to die" and when he started to get up, I took off around the corner and called 911 on my cell phone.

As I was talking to 911, I walked across Crystal to the field about 25-30 yards speaking with 911 as the intruder pursued me out of the trailer across Crystal to the dirt field. I was telling him to stay away from me and hung up on 911 once he got about 20 yards from me. He had a knife in each hand and said, "he was going to kill me". I began to look for a rock to throw at him but could only find a big dirt clod. When he was about 15 feet from me, I threw it and nailed him in the chest with it, but it didn't stop him, so I picked up another big dirt clod and hit him in the shoulder causing him to drop one of the knives.

He continued to walk towards me with the other knife in his hand as he lunged at me with the knife, I used an old bouncer move I learned from a 7 Degree Black Belt, when I was the Doorman at the Playgirl Club in Garden Grove, California in 1973. I used the move to take him to the ground and thought I had choked him out. He tried to get up but couldn't because of my forearm on his throat and my knee on his wrist. He cut me just above my right knee with the knife before I could take it out of his hand.

I got up and told him to stay down and then 911 called me back as I walked back to my trailer and tried to lock the gate behind me. I couldn't get the gate locked in time and when he tried to open the gate, I pushed him back and he fell backwards and hit the back on his head on the ground. He was knocked out but then got up and picked up one of the knives I had mistakenly left on the outside of the gate when I was trying to lock him out. Then the Sheriff arrived and took control of the situation by Tazing and cuffing him. He was provided medical care by EMT's when they arrived on scene.

The PTSD from this incident brought back several issues with my brain injury I had resolved 15-20 years ago. His vision, balance, equilibrium and memory were all affected negatively after the attack. I was unable to overcome these issues by himself and started counseling with to assist him with these challenges.

My counselor used EFT (8), EMDR (9) and Mindfulness Meditation Training to help him overcome the problems I was experiencing and move on.

Stress & Anxiety Reduction Information Re-Cap

- Become aware of what stresses you use mindfulness-based stress reduction, meditation, EFT Tapping, EMDR to control stress that triggers the limbic system fight or flight response.
- **▶** Get out of your head and into the community
- **Exercise More Eat Good Foods Get Plenty of Rest**
- ► Adapt, Improvise, Overcome and Move On
- Deep Breathe
- ► Take pride in yourself and what you have gone through
- ► Learn from every experience Good or Bad
- ► These valuable lessons will improve your quality of life and wellbeing if you learn from them
- **Be around healthy people who support you**
- Find ways to relax and cope that aren't counterproductive
- ► Think ahead and make lists use calendars to help you stay organized
- **Be responsible and mindful about what you do and the consequences of your actions**
- Stay Calm and relaxed as much a possible
- ► This is up to YOU and no on else
- Don't Give Up
- It won't be easy
- YOU CAN DO IT!

QUESTIONS



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<u>Similar</u>

The *limbic system* is the center of our emotions, learning ability, and memory. ... the "fight or flight" response, transmitting information to four other body systems.

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- Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn developed the **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction** (**MBSR**) program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Since its inception ... <u>Online Live Classes</u> <u>MBSR Online Classes Overview</u> <u>Classes</u> <u>Mindfulness</u>
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EMDR Therapy Session with Dr Becky Spelman. ... Dr. Becky Spelman uses a technique known as Eye ...

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Jan 3, 2012 - Uploaded by robertocarnivali

When doing voluntary eye movement you are obligated to remain in the present and have access to your ...

Suggested Reading Viewing List:

Why You're Hardwired for Self-Sabotage and What to Do ... ▶ 5:20

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Npguemshl4E

Nov 7, 2015 - Uploaded by Conquer Greatness

The **limbic system** is one of the oldest and most dominant regions of our brain. This is where the "**fight or flight**.

Inspiration about Finding your purpose https://youtu.be/HewbxiBxO38

Suggested Reading/Viewing List:

Fight or Flight Response - YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2GywoS77qc

By Bozeman Science ·

6 min ·

207,733 views ·

Added Jan 09, 2012

Paul Andersen explains how epinephrine is responsible for changes in chemistry of our body associated with the **fight or flight response**. Epinephrine ...

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- Video called 'Amygdala, PTSD, and the Limbic system', tagged as . Sign In. Sign up. ... Mindfulness Based Trauma Treatment; Doc Wiki; Amygdala, PTSD, and the Limbic ...

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- http://peacefulwarriors.net/12-ways-to-calm-the-overactivemind/?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=email_this&utm_source=email
- ▶ Research | Mindful Well-being
- www.mindful-well-being.com/research
- MBSR & MBCT Research. ... The following link reports on a 2011 publication of a ... http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/01/110121144007.htm?utm_source ...
- ▶ Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy: benefits in reducing ...
- www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22875545
- ... benefits in reducing depression following a ... traumatic brain injury ... Kabat-Zinn's manualized mindfulness-based stress reduction program and ...
- ► Stress Reduction Program Mindfulness-Based Stress ...
- www.umassmed.edu/cfm/stress-reduction
- Video embedded · Since 1979 more than 22,000 people have completed our eight week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. ... Post-traumatic Stress ...

Suggested Reading/Viewing List Continued:

EMDR - Eye Movement Desensitization and ... - YouTube 11:31

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTLLfdcJE0Q

Jan 27, 2012 - Uploaded by CalSouthern Psychology

A clip used during a recent CalSouthern lecture by Sarah Gilman and Susan Brown exploring Eye Movement .

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsQbzfW9txc

Feb 6, 2014 - Uploaded by The Psychology Webinar Group

Francine Shapiro Ph.D. **EMDR** Webinar "The Past is Present" ... **EMDR** Therapy Uses Eye Movements to ...

The Most Inspirational EFT Video With Founder ... - YouTube 7:14

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKDhRohzSdU

Nov 23, 2010 - Uploaded by TBMtolooseweight

We at http://www.inspiredeft.com love Gary Craig. His contribution to healing is immense. PS: we're giving ...

13 Free EFT Youtube Video

Adwww.tapping.com/EFT-Videos

Brand New Easy-to-Follow videos on Emotional Freedom Technique

Suggested Reading/Viewing List:

Fight or Flight vs. Relaxation Response

www.relaxationresponse.org/fightorflight.htm

"The relaxation response is a physical state of deep rest that changes the physical and emotional **responses to stress**."

Qualities of the **Fight or Flight Response**.

The Stress Response- Fight or Flight – YouTube 3:38

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtRrxNTnyh8

Nov 12, 2014 - Uploaded by learning junction

The "fight or flight response" is our body's primitive, automatic, inborn response that prepares the body to ...

How to Change Your Stress Response | Yoga International

https://yogainternational.com/.../chaos-or-calm-how-to-rewire-your-stress...

May 9, 2013 - When we feel **stressed**, our brain activates the sympathetic nervous system, which has come to be known as the **fight-or-flight response**.

The Fight or Flight Response - 5 Minute Stress Mastery

www.thebodysoulconnection.com/EducationCenter/fight.html

The "**fight or flight response**" is our body's primitive, automatic, inborn **response** that prepares the body to "**fight**" or "flee" from perceived attack, harm or threat to ...

Amygdala hijack - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amygdala hijack

What causes depression? - Harvard Health

www.health.harvard.edu/.../what-causes-depression Harvard University

Jun 9, 2009 - It's often said that **depression** results from a chemical imbalance, but that ... Amygdala: The amygdala is part of the **limbic system**, a group of ...

Six hours of meditation music: https://youtu.be/IzJh5cp9ysc

Suggested Reading/Viewing List:

Calm Down and Release the Amygdala - YouTube 6:41

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs559gulGDo

Jan 16, 2013 - Uploaded by ChrisCompany1029

Limbic System: Sex, Hallucinations, Emotion, Memory, PTSD, Amygdala. ... Amygdala hijack **fight** or flight ...

Brain injury movies / Sensory Over stimulation- Flooding ...

www.braininjury-explanation.com/.../brain-injury-mo...

It is also called the **fight or flight response**. ... The amygdala is part of the oldest part of the brains, the **limbic** ...

Hippocampus: Definition, Function & Location - Video ... ▶ 2:48

study.com/.../hippocampus-definition-function-locat...

The **limbic system** plays a huge part in our survival roles. It is responsible for our **fight or flight** responses ...

Conscious Communication Tip - Revealing Your Projections ... 2:37

vimeo.com > Institute for Optimal Living > Videos

Jan 1, 2013 - Instead of following the emotionally triggered mind into a **fight**, find your ... (**limbic** system and **fight or** ...