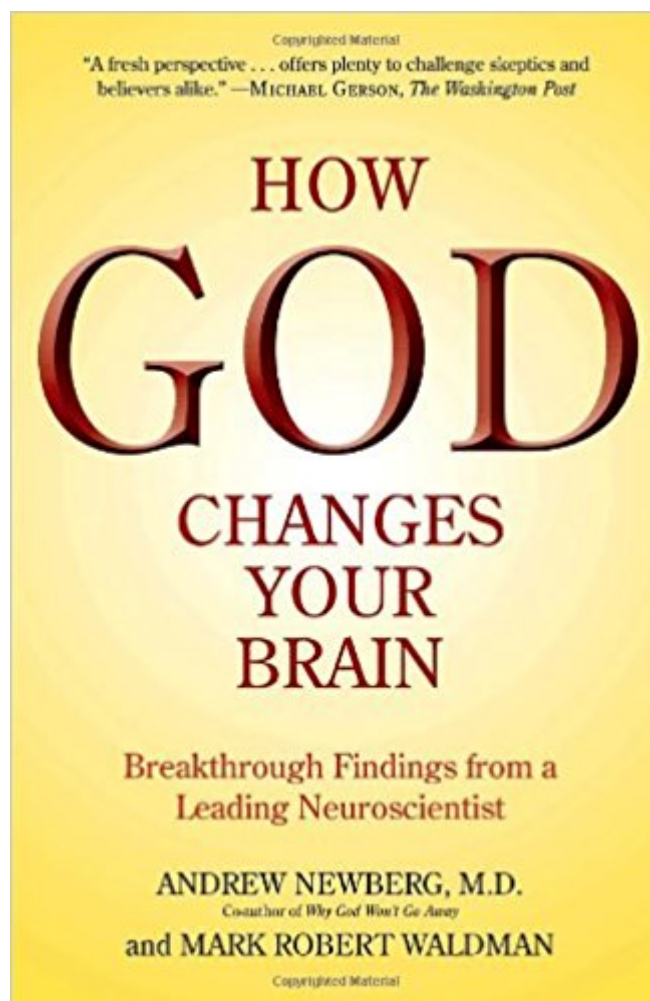


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# How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings From A Leading Neuroscientist



## Synopsis

God is greatâ™ for your mental, physical, and spiritual health. Based on new evidence culled from brain-scan studies, a wide-reaching survey of peopleâ€™s religious and spiritual experiences, and the authorsâ€™ analyses of adult drawings of God, neuroscientist Andrew Newberg and therapist Mark Robert Waldman offer the following breakthrough discoveries:Â

- â€¢ Not only do prayer and spiritual practice reduce stress, but just twelve minutes of meditation per day may slow down the aging process.
- â€¢ Contemplating a loving God rather than a punitive God reduces anxiety and depression and increases feelings of security, compassion, and love.
- â€¢ Fundamentalism, in and of itself, can be personally beneficial, but the prejudice generated by extreme beliefs can permanently damage your brain.
- â€¢ Intense prayer and meditation permanently change numerous structures and functions in the brain, altering your values and the way you perceive reality.

Both a revelatory work of modern science and a practical guide for readers to enhance their physical and emotional health, *How God Changes Your Brain* is a first-of-a-kind book about faith that is as credible as it is inspiring.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Over the past decade or so, numerous studies have suggested that prayer and meditation can enhance physical health and healing from illness. In this stimulating and provocative book, two academics at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Spirituality and the Mind contend that contemplating God actually reduces stress, which in turn prevents the deterioration of the brain's dendrites and increases neuroplasticity. The authors conclude that meditation and other spiritual

practices permanently strengthen neural functioning in specific parts of the brain that aid in lowering anxiety and depression, enhancing social awareness and empathy, and improving cognitive functioning. The book's middle section draws on the authors' research on how people experience God and where in the brain that experience might be located. Finally, the authors offer exercises for enhancing physical, mental and spiritual health. Their suggestions are commonsensical and common to other kinds of health regimens: smile, stay intellectually active, consciously relax, yawn, meditate, exercise aerobically, dialogue with others and trust in your beliefs. Although the book's title is a bit misleading, since it is not God but spiritual practice that changes the brain, this forceful study could stir controversy among scientists and philosophers. Illus. (Mar. 24) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• To this musty debate, Newberg, perhaps America's leading expert on the neurological basis of religion, brings a fresh perspective. His new book summarizes several years of groundbreaking research on the biological basis of religious experience. And it offers plenty to challenge skeptics and believers alike. • --Michael Gerson's editorial dedicated to the book for The Washington Post • The authors present an elaborate, engaging meditation program to reduce anger and fear and increase serenity and love. They embrace faith (not necessarily religious), diversity, tolerance, and • compassionate communication. . . . A substantial advance in the self-help/spirituality genre and an excellent choice for general collections. • • "Library Journal" • Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman give us a magnificent, comprehensive explanation of how spiritual beliefs and experiences enhance changes in our brains and yield better health and well-being. They bring science and religion closer together. • • "Herbert Benson, M.D., author of The Relaxation Response" • How God Changes Your Brain is a highly practical, easy-to-read guide on the interface between spirituality and neuroscience, filled with useful information that can make your brain and your life better, starting today! • • "Daniel G. Amen, M.D. author of Change Your Brain, Change Your Life" • Not since William James's The Varieties of Religious Experience has there been a work that so exquisitely integrates science and spirituality. Newberg and Waldman have written a book that is wise, up-to-date, scholarly, mature, and imaginative. At the same time it is a down-to-earth work that will surely inspire repeated readings. • • "George Vaillant, M.D., author of Spiritual Evolution" • How God Changes Your Brain boldly explores the relationship between the structure of our brains and our ability not only to experience but to cultivate innate compassion and deep inner peace. • • "Jill Bolte Taylor, Ph.D., author of My Stroke of Insight" • The authors

present an illuminating and encouraging view of the inner and outer workings of our neurological perception of reality and how profoundly it is affected by our spiritual practices. Their practical exercises for a brain tune-up are revolutionary, and I'm enjoying immensely including them in my daily spiritual regime. • "Michael Bernard Beckwith, author of Spiritual Liberation • Stimulating and provocative. . . . The authors conclude that meditation and other spiritual practices permanently strengthen neural functioning in specific parts of the brain that aid in lowering anxiety and depression, enhancing social awareness and empathy, and improving cognitive functioning.. . . this forceful study could stir controversy among scientists and philosophers. • "Publishers Weekly

From the Hardcover edition.

I first read How God Changes Your Brain after checking it out my local library. The book informed me about my own thinking of how God interfaces with all human beings. I am not well schooled in neuroscience, but because of Newberg's and Waldman's clear and concise explanations of a complicated subject, I understood more of what was at the root of my clinical depression. I bought my own copy to mark up. Dr. Newberg suggests paths to serenity, but it was on page 132 that I received clarity. "If you allow anger and fear to dominate, you will lose the neurological ability to think logically and act compassionately toward others. In fact, it is nearly impossible to find peace and serenity if your mind is preoccupied by negative, anxious, or hateful thoughts. • When I understood how my erroneous thoughts about God could be replaced with repeated truth about our good and loving God in focused daily meditations, God began to restore my soul. One year later, after taking to heart disciplines suggested in this book, my brain has changed. This book helped me start the healing process.

I am a catholic, Christian, believer. For a long, long time, I have struggled with the problem how to find meaningful common ground with all faiths, and especially those with agnostic or atheist faith, who are genuinely interested in the real golden rule of treating others with care, love and respect. This book explores what might be the ultimate common ground of being human and treating each other with all good intents, and none of the bad side of what warring beliefs bring. Being a human being, inside each of our heads, is the brain wiring to take care of each other, to treat each other well, to be more than the savage animal beast, to be a higher being. Whether we choose to believe this is the created imprint of a higher power in us, or a highly evolved adaption for survival, it is undeniable it is present in each and every one of us. And our lives' goal is to strengthen it, nurture it, develop it. Not to argue so much about how it got there, that is only our egos getting in the way.

This extraordinary book, although extremely detailed, captured my attention and captivated my imagination. As someone who is already fascinated by the brain, science, and a person of faith, I was very interested in the content. My attention was easily held by their writing style. I appreciated the numerous citations of the scholarly literature. I have applied many of these techniques suggested by Newberg and Waldman and they really did work for me. I was extremely satisfied with this book and I recommend it to others if you are looking to broaden your perspective and bridge the gap between science and faith.

Loved this book. The name is a bit misleading because it is not about "God" at all but what how our brains reaction to meditation and various smilar techniques. I enjoyed the writing and loads of interesting anecdotes and information about various studies revealing the power of mindfulness and meditation. I heard the author speaking on the radio and I was so intrigued that it inspired me to buy the book. I've since given it to a few friends as gifts. Highly reccomended to anyone interested in meditation, mindfulness, positive thinkig and the neuroscience.

"...every human brain, from early childhood on, contemplates the possibity that spiritual realms exist. " Take a moment and let that sink in. This book offers many such opportunities for consideration, philosophically, psychologically, spiritually and scientifically. A wonderful blend of not too dense facts and research and practical ways to help enhance and maximize whole brain functioning, it gives us a different way to think about thinking about God, the Divine, Source, All that Is, The Force, By Whatever Name You Choose. The best part about it all? Thinking about the spiritual realm of life is great for our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. And...doing spiritual practices whether or not they are connected with religion or a belief system substantially benefits our brains.

There are concepts here that I never knew or thought about. I also purchased the CD and am really enjoying hearing what I can do on a daily basis to improve my listening, talking and positive thinking to get the desired positive brain changes for an improved life. It's always my own discipline that is at play. I also got this for 2 friends who were at odds in their friendships & they are changing. They too are glad I gave them this gift'

I thought this was a well written, fascinating book about the perceived character of God and how our brain changes because of thinking about God to perceive the world. The writers try to study the idea

of God and the brain objectively, by telling how the parts of the brain work and interact with our emotions and perceptions. Meditation becomes the religion-free spiritual practice that is studied extensively. The facts for its benefit on the brain are surprising and motivating. After reading this book you will have a better understanding of how people relate to God, how you yourself relates to God, and you will be left with an incentive to change your brain by introducing meditation into your life. Highly recommended.

One of the scientists writing this is an atheist so this book is useful wherever one is on the religious spectrum. The book focuses on focusing through meditation, giving examples of religious and non-religious programs for focused meditation.

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