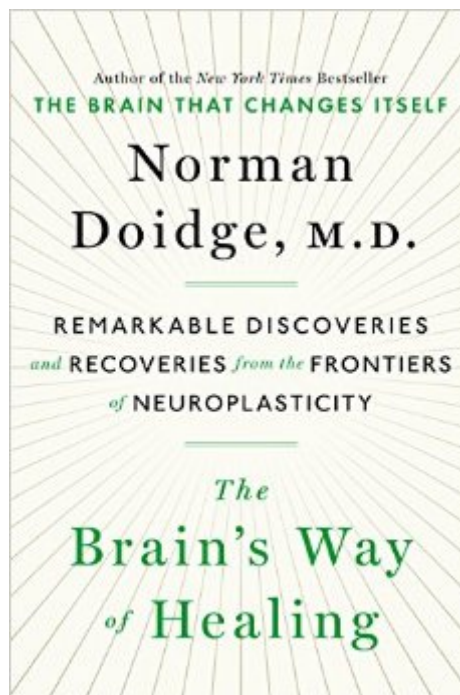


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# The Brain's Way Of Healing: Remarkable Discoveries And Recoveries From The Frontiers Of Neuroplasticity



## Synopsis

Now a New York Times Bestseller! The bestselling author of *The Brain That Changes Itself* presents astounding advances in the treatment of brain injury and illness. Winner of the 2015 Gold Nautilus Award in Science & Cosmology. In *The Brain That Changes Itself*, Norman Doidge described the most important breakthrough in our understanding of the brain in four hundred years: the discovery that the brain can change its own structure and function in response to mental experience—what we call neuroplasticity. His revolutionary new book shows, for the first time, how the amazing process of neuroplastic healing really works. It describes natural, non-invasive avenues into the brain provided by the forms of energy around us—light, sound, vibration, movement—which pass through our senses and our bodies to awaken the brain's own healing capacities without producing unpleasant side effects. Doidge explores cases where patients alleviated years of chronic pain or recovered from debilitating strokes or accidents; children on the autistic spectrum or with learning disorders normalizing; symptoms of multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, and cerebral palsy radically improved, and other near-miracle recoveries. And we learn how to vastly reduce the risk of dementia with simple approaches anyone can use. For centuries it was believed that the brain's complexity prevented recovery from damage or disease. *The Brain's Way of Healing* shows that this very sophistication is the source of a unique kind of healing. As he did so lucidly in *The Brain That Changes Itself*, Doidge uses stories to present cutting-edge science with practical real-world applications, and principles that everyone can apply to improve their brain's performance and health.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My review of "The Brain's Way of Healing" is that of someone who experienced one of the therapies he describes, the Tomatis Method, many years before Norman Doidge's book was published. For me, this is a practical subject, and I hope to shed some light both on this book and to address the natural skepticism that one might have who has not experienced or known someone who has benefited from the type of therapies Dr. Doidge describes. My life is an example of neuroplasticity. I was 40 when I found out about the Tomatis Method, described in Chapter 8 of Dr. Doidge's book. I had never graduated college. I was born with a cleft palate, had speech therapy, and was developmentally slow. I was a traumatized child based on my childhood experiences. In my early 20s, I had cancer and was treated with chemotherapy and radiation at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. In my mid-30s, I married a wonderful woman from the Philippines whom I met in the States. She was a doctor, and she did not care that I was less accomplished career-wise. It was her sudden death via car accident that plunged me into a phase that I could not pull out of. I was like an old-fashioned record player where the needle got stuck in a groove. I traveled to the Listening Centre in Toronto, Canada in 2003. This is the same centre that Dr. Doidge talks about in his book. After doing Tomatis, the needle lifted, I wanted to live again, and I returned to college and finished a degree program within three years after completing my initial treatment. It's important that I share that none of this happened overnight, and mine was not a one-time, cure-all treatment. I have received Tomatis sound boosts over the years. The point remains, I went from a phase where I was not functioning to one where I was renewed and not only got back on my feet, but accomplished a task - finishing a 4-year university program - that I had been unable to do at an earlier age. I'd recommend Dr. Doidge's book to anyone. It's well researched and well written, and I feel for those in pain who might think his tone is too positive and optimistic. In the beginning, we have to allow a crack of optimism to break through. We are fortunate to live in an age where alternative therapies are already established and neuroplasticity is acknowledged. Mine is among the many stories of people getting help where they previously felt helpless. We know what we know, and what's difficult to acknowledge is our ignorance. I'd hope that readers of Dr. Doidge's book consider if any of the therapies he describes so well might help themselves or others. Norman Doidge's book is a welcome sign of the times, a beacon of light and hope that gives these alternative therapies the respect and consideration that they deserve.

In his new book, Norman Doidge describes the role of brain plasticity in healing. This paradigm is helping us recognize how improvement from symptoms of all kinds is not only possible, but explainable, as well as reproducible. Doidge artfully draws us in with people's stories, including the experiences of Dr. Michael Moskowitz, a chronic pain specialist who figured out a way to cure his own increasingly debilitating chronic pain after 13 years (chapter 1). He has also successfully taught the technique to some of his patients. In chapter 2, Doidge walks with John Pepper, a World War II survivor with Parkinson's disease who devised a program that enabled him to recover lost mobility and other functions. Pepper uses his approach not only to keep many of his symptoms at bay decades after diagnosis, he has also taught it to others with Parkinson's, who have also improved. More amazing stories and treatment approaches follow in each chapter and the case studies highlight this new paradigm. The research starts to explain the ever-elusive, until now, "why." In easy-to-read connecting language Doidge gives us a framework for understanding what is happening during these transformations. He, and the studies he cites throughout, take us beyond our current understanding of the brain. The principles of brain plasticity presented by Doidge can be summarized as follows (chapter 3): Events such as strokes, infections, head injuries, radiation, toxins and degenerative processes cause brain injury and affect our neurons. While some neurons die following such events, the new science is showing us that some neurons start to signal in irregular ways following injury, which can make the brain "noisy" and confused. Other neurons become dormant (referred to as "non-use"). Improvement is based on the extent to which these neurons can heal, rewire, and recover from changes in function. Doidge presents 4 stages of neuroplastic healing, which gives us new ways of understanding how recovery occurs.

Neurostimulation (1) is commonly needed and can occur through attention to internal processes (such as mindful attention to sensations and movement, and intentional focusing of the mind on specific tasks) as well as through external input (such as from sound, light, and vibration). The energy provided by neurostimulation enables the brain to repair communication pathways and regain its innate capacity to regulate or "modulate" itself. The modulated brain (2) regains its ability to cycle, alternating from periods of activity to periods of rest and repair. Modulation allows the brain to relax, rest and heal (3). A rested brain is able to learn and rewire (4). Learning new skills allows a person to restore old functions or develop new ones and is a process referred to as neurodifferentiation. The process of healing, and the extent to which recovery is possible, differs for everyone. Each person, as well as the events leading to symptoms, is unique. Not everyone needs to address all 4 stages of neuroplastic healing for improvement or recovery to occur. Some people experience significant or even full recovery after strokes and brain injuries. Others, such as people

described who have Parkinson's and Multiple Sclerosis, can use tools to regain function and manage their diseases even though they do not achieve a cure or reversal of the underlying disease process. Some people presented have recovered fully from autoimmune-induced blindness, dyslexia, sensory integration problems, and serious debilitating developmental delays (each detailed through case studies in later book chapters). With some symptoms and chronic diseases, people need to keep using their tools to maintain their gains but can also recover again after periods of discontinuation. With other symptoms, such as Dr. Moskowitz's work with chronic pain, the techniques can be discontinued once symptoms resolve. The amount of time and effort involved in using these techniques varies. Recovery from strokes, when new neuronal pathways need to be developed, can take months or years. At the other extreme, recovery from chronic symptoms of traumatic brain injury (TBI) began for two women within hours of initial treatment. In this setting, neurostimulation energized neurons to better modulate, allowing them to begin to communicate more effectively almost immediately. In these two cases, functions that had been interrupted rather than destroyed were restored. We are at the frontier of a paradigm shift. The seemingly miraculous changes described here are beginning to reveal their secrets and Doidge does a masterful job of giving us the tools to begin to explore these new dimensions to whatever extent we may want. (Doidge's website has a FAQ with links to resources).

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