

Nine Critical Functions of Your Attuned Middle Prefrontal Cortex

Adapted from an amazing and friendly text: "The Mindful Brain"

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Sustained, skillfully focused attention with Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy activates and develops these nine Middle Prefrontal Cortex functions. How you focus your attention shapes the structure of the brain -- balancing both mental -- physical and very important relational health.

Body Balance | Self Behavior Regulation· Body Regulation is achieved by the Autonomic (automatic) Nervous System. The system generally works without conscious control and regulates functions like heart rate, breathing, digestion, vascular tone, inflammation and immune response, etc. It gives us the ability to come back to base line, to peace and ease after stressors.

Attuned Communication | Psychological Mindedness· Attuned Communication is the ability to feel another ones feelings. Feeling felt. Children need attunement to feel secure and to develop well. Through out our life we need attunement to feel close and connected.

Emotional Balance | Emotional Regulation | Openness to Experience· Emotional Balance in this context is defined as being able to balance between rigidity and chaos/arousal. In other words, being able to keep from being overwhelmed or becoming inflexible in one's emotional response. The ability to feel fear, sadness and anger and change it to ease and peace. Also gives you the ability to stay clear and focus in the face of storms from both outside and inside of us.

Response Flexibility | Psychological Flexibility· Response flexibility is the capacity to pause before action. Psychological Flexibility. Psychological flexibility means "contacting the present moment fully as a conscious human being, and based on what the situation affords, changing or persisting in behavior in the service of chosen values".

In everyday language, this means holding our own thoughts and emotions a bit more lightly. We grow to *skillfully act* on and persevere toward longer term values rather than getting derailed by short term impulses. ACT helps us learn to not get bogged down in avoidance and self-defeating struggles with unwanted thoughts, inconvenient emotions and distressing ideas . . .

Empathy | "Mind Sight" | Compassion· Empathy is defined as conscious awareness and sensitivity to the mind of someone else. It is the putting of oneself in someone else's shoes. Having compassion and seeing others points of view.

Insight | Mindfulness | Self-Knowing Awareness· Insight links the past, present and future. Insight means integrating cortical representation of autobiographical memory stores and limbic firing that gives emotional texture to the emerging themes of our present awareness, life story and image of the future.

Fear Modulation | Fear Extinction· Fear can be modulated from the middle PFC via neurons that enervate the amygdale, a limbic structure that registers threat and opportunity. These neurons can release calming neurotransmitters (GABA) and can be consciously reprogrammed.

Intuition· Intuition in this context means registering the input from neurons from the heart and gut. In other words, respecting one's gut feeling.

Morality· Morality in this context means the ability to think of the larger social good and enact those behaviors, even when alone.