

from the sidelines

# Saving your brain

Since my email address is available to anyone surfing the Internet, I receive more than my share of unsolicited messages. Occasionally a public relations firm will send me an article that is generic enough to perhaps fit the readership of any trade magazine. Rarely do I think these articles would be of interest to you, but the other day "Brain Do's and Don'ts" came over the line and caught my attention. After all, who doesn't want to take better care of his or her brain?

So, in the interest of providing information you can use, here are some selected tips (and my comments) regarding your medulla oblongata, courtesy of neuroscientist Dr. Daniel Amen (that's a name that'll jump off the Yellow Pages), author of the bestseller "Change Your Brain, Change Your Life."

## Brain Do's:

- Wear a helmet in high-risk situations (such as coming home late without having called your spouse)
- Eat healthy ("waiter, make that 50 wings instead 75")
- Watch the Disney movie "Pollyanna" (you can't make this stuff up)
- Surround yourself with great smells (fresh cut grass yes, maintenance building bathroom, no)
- Learn and use self-hypnosis and meditation daily (but not while commuting)
- Think through answers before automatically saying no (I'll post this one on the frig for the wife)
- Make naturally oppositional children mind you the first time (Does Dr. Amen HAVE children?)
- Sing and hum whenever you can (but expect funny looks from others)
- Move in rhythms (easier to do when you're humming "Stayin' Alive")
- Take medications when needed (especially the Advil after the first outdoor activities of spring)
- Do full brain evaluations for people who do terrible things (start with marching band directors)

## Brain Don'ts

- Lie around the house and never exercise (brain obesity—the next plague)
- Think in black-or-white terms (oh, he's all wrong on this one)
- Read other people's minds (I know what he's thinking here)
- Blame other people for your problems (but it's the American way)
- Label yourself or others with negative terms (now he's knocking my hobbies)
- Personalize situations that have little to do with you (don't you see this sign on my back that reads, "It's all about me"?)
- Push people away (unless they're too loud on their cell phones)
- Focus too much on what other people think of you (odds are they aren't thinking about you at all—"Amen" to this one)

Allow your life to just happen without your directing and planning it (obviously the good doctor's without a significant other)

Allow thoughts to go over and over in your head (you mean you can stop them?)

Isolate yourself when you feel worried, depressed or panicky (yes, please try and spread these feelings around)

Deny you have problems (Are you talking to me?)



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