



THE BIG IDEA

Succeeding in life isn't always about doing something. Most of the time it's about not doing something..

WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW IT?

Because we are human beings, not human doings.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

- 1. Commit to spending consistent time in silence. Put the phone in another room, and be silent.**
- 2. While consistency is key, don't be too hard on yourself. If you can't do 30 minutes, do 5. Just do what you can.**

START HERE

This series is all about the spiritual rhythms that Christians need to practice to connect with God, and grow in faith. We have been covering a number of topics, and we want our entire church to be a part of the conversation. If you missed any of the messages from Sunday, you can catch up [here](#).

CONVERSATION GUIDE

This week's message was geared towards helping us understand what we can learn from the rhythm of silence. below is some really compelling information about the brain and silence to explore with the group.

Some science-y stuff on how your brain works

Before we talk about the effect that silence has on your brain, we should talk about how the brain works. First, we have the amygdala. Think of it as the shape of two halves of an almond - this area of your brain is the primal fight-or-flight instinct. It is very small. Next, we have the thalamus - this is the shape of two halves of a walnut, slightly bigger than the amygdala, and sitting just behind it. The thalamus is the sensing part of your brain. Surrounding the amygdala and the thalamus and extending down your spine is the limbic system. This system performs your basic functions, as well as encodes memory and creates emotional responses. Your brain is also divided into lobes. The frontal lobe - sitting behind your eyes - controls logic, reasoning, language, and general awareness. You also have the parietal lobe, above and behind your ears, which places you in relation to other things in the world. And there is one more small portion of your brain - the anterior cingulate cortex - that becomes very

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Book- *How God Changes Your Brain* by Andrew Newburg-
[BUY](#)
- More meditation resources posted on the Forefront blog-
[READ](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Now through December

- Christmas with the Kenmore.
Find out more at
forefrontnyc.com/kenmore

November 25th

- Happy Hour at Ted's Tavern-
523 3rd Ave, New York, NY
10016- 6-8pm

November 28th

- Serve with the Bowery
Mission- forefrontnyc.com/serve

important when we talk about silence and the brain. It processes social awareness, empathy, and intuition. The anterior cingulate sits just between the frontal lobe and the limbic system - negotiating between our logical thoughts and our emotional responses. **

Brain studies

Brain-scan studies conducted by UPenn Neuroscientist Andrew Newberg show that regular meditation over a period of time increases activity in the prefrontal cortex and the anterior cingulate. Newberg describes one construction worker his team studied: the man wanted to increase his attention and focus and was given a 12-minute meditation involving time spent focusing on breathing, chanting of simple syllables, and repetitive hand movements to practice each day. After periods of weeks, the team brought him back in to scan his brain. He was able to alter the functioning of his brain through meditation. This demonstrates something really cool about our brains: neuroplasticity. Our brains have the ability to grow and change and we can do things like meditate to stimulate this growth!

Religious meditation

But, that meditation did not involve spirituality or God in any way. What happens in your brain when you meditate on God? Newberg found that "religious and spiritual contemplation changes your brain in a profoundly different way." Religious and spiritual contemplation strengthens a specific part of your brain, the anterior cingulate, that is focused outward: it allows for greater awareness of others and empathy. It can also subdue destructive feelings and anger. You can damage this part of your brain by focusing on things that make you angry or frightened, making you more likely to react in a hostile way to others. When the anterior cingulate is exercised, we become more outwardly focused, in an empathetic way. However, the anterior cingulate can also be shut down. Focusing on anger activates the amygdala and shuts down the reasoned or caring response coming from the anterior cingulate and the frontal lobe.

BENEDICTION

In closing, pray this prayer together, from Seeking God's Face,

"GREAT AND MIGHTY GOD, BECAUSE OF JESUS I CAN SEEK YOUR FACE; BECAUSE OF JESUS I MAY ENTER YOUR PRESENCE; BECAUSE OF JESUS I'M MADE, WITH ALL YOUR PEOPLE, INTO A HOUSE OF PRAYER; BECAUSE OF JESUS YOUR EARS ARE OPEN TO LISTENING TO MY PRAYERS. AND SO I PRAY IN JESUS NAME, AMEN."

****Diagram of the limbic system and lobes of the brain**

