

The Great Inner Divide

This chapter is excerpted from [Unite and Concur: How to Stop Arguing and Start Communicating about Politics](#)

A journey into the great inner divide

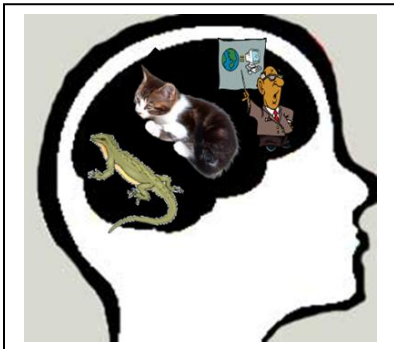
After a turbulent three-month relationship, Joe dumped me. We weren't a match and I knew it, but I was devastated anyway. When Marla saw me, she said, "I want to work with you." She instructed me to lie down on a massage table and told me she was going to "regress me" to process my distress. She invited me to verbally lash out at Joe without censoring, which I gladly did. In a matter of a few minutes it was as if time had slipped away and Joe was no longer the target of my rage. It was my late husband Mike, who had died four years earlier.



I don't know who broke it, but someone did, and boy, am I mad at them!

It felt incredibly liberating to give voice to the anger, devastation and pain that Mike's death caused. My rant cycled through rage, fear, sadness, guilt, appreciation and love. Marla encouraged me wherever my rant took me. After about an hour, she nudged me toward the gentler emotions. Then she shifted me from feeling and emoting into thinking by answering questions.

I was amazed. It was like an initiation. I had no idea all that emotion was inside me, but Marla saw it when I walked in the door. It was like she turned a key and opened a door to a part of me I didn't know existed. It was a major step in my healing, a powerful key that unlocked my passion for life. It also was a pivotal lesson about my subconscious and the great inner divide that exists when thought, feeling and desire are at odds with each other.



Diving in deep

Marla saw and skillfully tapped into the residual trauma that I was unable to process while my world turned upside down during my late husband's passing. I later took the training that allowed Marla to open the door for me. It was called *Emotional Healing* and was taught by a man named Chris Wright. I have many mentors in my life, and he is high on the list of people I am grateful to.

Wright's work relies on the Triune Brain Theory of Paul McLean. This research explains that we have three different brain systems that are separate and distinct from each other. There are many ways to divide the brain for discussion. I use the Triune Brain Theory because it's the one I leaned and it works well for the understanding we need to learn to unite and concur.

I'll call the different brains "brainlets." (Cute, I know.)

Each brainlet processes information in its own way and if all goes according to plan, each brainlet communicates with the others to create a perspective that integrates the input of all three brainlets.

When all doesn't go according to plan, the brainlets send conflicting messages that never get integrated and you have your own personal mental battlefield.

That's what I had when Joe dumped me. Marla's session got my silent brainlets talking, and all three brainlets starting to work together. I won't say Chris Wright's training finished the job – that's ongoing – but I will say his information and techniques were incredibly useful. I talk about the role of the three brainlets when I teach persuasion classes, and I apply his information in all my writing and training.

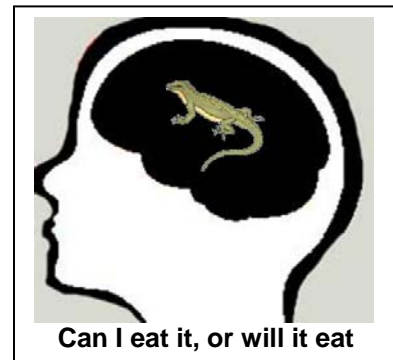
When the three brainlets work together, it's kind of like a corporation that operates from a mission statement that was formulated, endorsed and followed by all employees, management and the executives.

That's not how corporations always work and it's not how our brains always work either.

Humble, concrete beginnings

Okay, here's what I learned about the brain from Marla, Chris Wright and Dr. Paul Mclean.

The first brainlet to develop in an infant is the sensory-motor brainlet, or the action brainlet. It's also called the reptilian brain(let).



I sometime affectionately refer to the reptilian brainlet as Izzie. (I nickname the brainlets to make the concept concrete. The reptilian brainlet likes concreteness.)

So here's the deal. Infants exclusively develop the reptilian brainlet, or their Izzie, for the first year and a half of development. Izzie is responsible for the survival instinct. Izzie is concrete and physical, which is why babies explore their physical environments so enthusiastically. Izzie relates to the world through black and white, simplified concepts such as right and wrong, hungry and full, and can I eat it or will it eat me.

I used contrasting words in the last sentence to engage your Izzie. Your Izzie was developed to guide your movements, and action requires contrast (e.g. you have to decide right or left before moving.) For Izzie, dichotomy is essential.

Your Izzie brainlet is your action, “ME brainlet.”

Izzie is not a problem. But when Izzie usurps the thinking process, that’s a problem. Which Izzie does, because Izzie is faster than his cellmates. I call that a Reptilian Regression. When Izzie pulls you under and does all your thinking for you, the world becomes a dark and dangerous place that you need to defend against. You see enemies where there are none. For example, if you call customer service when you’re in a Reptilian Regression you’ll alienate the very person who can help you. If you have a political conversation with someone you disagree with while you’re in a Reptilian Regression, it’s likely to become a mud fest. I’ll tell you later how those who would divide us manipulate your Izzie, but now, let’s look at your mammalian brainlet.

Lets get emotional

When a child becomes a toddler, the main developmental focus turns to the mammalian, emotional, limbic, relational brainlet. This brainlet is the We brainlet, so I affectionately refer to it as Webby. Webby starts with “We” and webs are all about connections, just as the emotional brainlet is.

The nickname “Webby” is cute and playful – and the mammalian brainlet likes cute and playful

Webby develops through play and relationships. The more developed your Webby is, the more refined your emotions become.

You can understand the difference between the reptilian and mammalian brainlets by looking at your pets. Your pet lizards don’t have emotional brainlets, but your cat, dog and hamsters do. Your lizard has cold eyes, and your puppy has warm ones.

Your critters don’t lose their reptilian brainlet capacity just because they also have mammalian brainlets. Their survival instincts are alive and well, which is the very reason they live to try to sleep on your bed another day.



By the way, when I make a personal comment, particularly one like referring to your pets, I stimulate your Webby. Most of us have a sweet spot in our hearts for some animal we have loved in our lives, and that sweet spot activates our Webby brain. I spent Thanksgiving this year with a couple whose faces lit up as they discussed their pet snakes. Even reptiles can evoke a Webby response.

Your pets’ reptilian and mammalian brainlets talk to each other, each relating the type of information that is their specialty, and as a result, Fluffy and Fido make intelligent choices. Not intellectual choices, but intelligent ones – chosen in their own best interests. That’s the definition of intelligence – the ability to act in

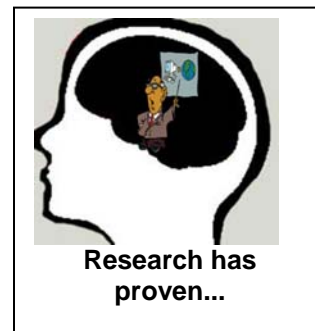
accordance with your best interests. (If you think Fluffy and Fido are more intelligent than some policy-makers, you actually may be right.)

Webby is an asset...until you hit a Mammalian Meltdown. That's when your emotions override your reflexive action and your logic. That's what goes on when someone who can't feed his kids spends thousand of dollars saving a pet that is way beyond saving, or when someone stays in an abusive relationship because the victimizer "really is a good person deep down." A Mammalian Meltdown can lead to destructive choices because emotions overrule the vital input of your other brainlets. A Mammalian Meltdown also hinders reasonable political dialogue.

From me and we to it – now that's progress!

Let's move on to the early teens, when intellectual capacity develops. The WE brainlet and the ME brainlet are surrounded by developing IT brainlet. This is the faculty to stand back and observe with neutrality. It's not all about me any more. It's not all about us, either. It's impersonal, abstract and logical. It's your Neo-Cortical Brainlet. I thought about calling this brainlet IT, and I considered Spock, but settled on The Prof.

The Prof is your inner professor, your higher reasoning faculty and your technical capacity. The Prof interprets the information the other brainlets present to it, dissects it, reorders it, and applies meaning to it.



The Prof is the highest of the brainlets, but it's no less dangerous for the Prof to run the show than for Izzie or Webby. If the Prof is doing all your thinking for you, it's kind of like if a president tries to run a country without input from constituents.

The Prof can look at the horrors of life without compassion and The Prof can examine threats without sensing danger. The Prof also can logically dismiss the concerns of those who experience compassion and sense danger.

If The Prof operates in isolation, I call it a Neo-Cortical Apartheid.

We, Me V. IT

Okay. So we have three brainlets and they each operate differently. Which one is best?

The answer is, none of them. If you operate from a single brain without guidance of the other two, you are being a "third-wit." You need all three brainlets, working together to navigate the great divides of life – including the great political divide. You need the action of the Izzie brainlet, the emotion of the Webby brainlet and

the thought of The Prof brainlet. You need to integrate all three brainlets in order to be able to unite and concur.



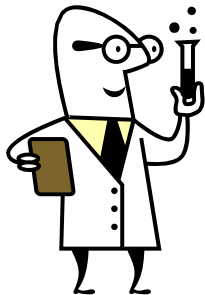
Now, have you ever been so agitated that you were beside yourself? That's the Reptilian Regression. Chances are your reptilian brainlet was so triggered, it submerged you in its defenses and your mammalian brain and neo-cortical brain didn't stand a chance. I confess; I have had this happen to me on numerous occasions as the result of an inflammatory word or two spoken in a political discussion.

Now, in case you didn't know, I'm a woman. Once a month my emotions play a stronger role in my life than other times. I sometimes experience a Mammalian Meltdown, where Webby dominates. Those aren't the best times for me to discuss emotionally charged political issues because my Webby gets her feelings hurt and takes everything so personally.

If you're crying over long-distance commercials, your Mammalian Meltdown hogging the show. Intellectually you know these people will get their service sorted out, but it seems so sad in the



that's
phone
moment.



Some of us are intellectually dominant. The Prof takes control. When that happens, you don't have conversations, you present dissertations. If you have a Neo-Cortical Apartheid, you might rationally explain that since there's no reason for you to be upset over something, you're not. Your Prof insists the issue is impersonal when your Izzie and your Webby are screaming that it is very personal indeed.

You need all three perspectives in varying degrees.

If you're threatened by an intruder, you want your survival instincts functioning – but you do want logical and emotional input. When you're enjoying nature, you want your emotions flowing – but you don't want Izzie or The Prof to go to sleep. And when you're taking your SATs, you want The Prof to be sharp – but not to the exclusion of Izzie and Webby.

Me, We and IT

Dale Carnegie and many in the sales world remind us that we are creatures of emotion, not creatures of logic. I say we are creatures of instinct, emotion and logic.

When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion. ~Dale Carnegie

You need your Me and your We *and* your IT way of looking at the world. You need your action, emotion and thinking brainlets talking to each other. You need your wants, feelings and thoughts working congruently. You need your Izzie, Webby and Prof - to function together in order to deal effectively with life.

You need to create a United League of Brainlets to be able to effectively discuss the things that matter – including politics. You need mental, emotional and volitional congruence if you want to unite and concur and to navigate the great political divide. Which I assume you do since you're reading this.

You also need to upshift others whose own way of thinking is divided.

Those who would divide us

Those who seek to divide and conquer don't want unity. They know that by triggering a Reptilian Regression, a Mammalian Meltdown or a Neo-Cortical Apartheid, they can get you to react to the world around you in a way that is in their best interests, not yours.

Some of those who seek to divide us do it consciously and knowingly. Others do it habitually. But this book isn't about them – it's about we who allow ourselves to be divided. It's time we stopped.



It helps you to deflect divisive tactics when you understand how they work. That's why I'm spending so much time on the Great Inner Divide, which is the basis for the inner game of political divisiveness. Let's look at some specific dynamics.

For more, order [Unite and Concur](#) now.

You also can read my post about why this information is so important for relationships at: [Transcend the Guilt Trap](http://www.speakstronginlove.com/blog/2008/08/26/a-glowing-memorial-and-a-set-up-for-guilt-and-remorse/)
<http://www.speakstronginlove.com/blog/2008/08/26/a-glowing-memorial-and-a-set-up-for-guilt-and-remorse/>