This is your brain, this is your brain on stress.

Any Questions?

**How We Lose it**
The area just behind your forehead is the brain’s executive control center. Brain 2 (prefrontal cortex) is responsible for our ability to inhibit inappropriate impulses. Ordinary, everyday acute stresses are capable, however, of undermining this basic sense of self-control, allowing emotionality and impulsivity to take over.

**Unstressed**
Signals from Brain 2 move to areas deep within the brain to regulate Brain 1 which controls our habits, basic appetites, such as hunger, sex and aggression, and emotional responses such as fear. Brain 2 also regulates the stress responses from the brain stem, including the activity of neurons that make norepinephrine and dopamine. Moderate levels of these two neurotransmitters engage receptors that strengthen connections to Brain 2.

**Stressed**
Brain 1 commands the production of excess norepinephrine and dopamine under stressful conditions. That, in turn, shuts down the functioning of Brain 2 but strengthens activity in Brain 1. High levels of norepinephrine and dopamine in Brain 2 switch on receptors that open channels that disconnect the links in Brain 2, thus weakening that area’s role in controlling emotions and impulses.
## Which Brain are you using?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Brain 1- Intuition &amp; Fast</strong></th>
<th><strong>Brain 2- Rational &amp; Slow</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control.</td>
<td>Operates more consciously and gives attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Qualities

**Brain 1**

- Good for driving a car on an empty highway.
- Watches the commercials.
- Orient to the source of a sudden sound.
- Detect hostility in a voice and picks up on nonverbal signals.
- Answers simple questions (i.e. $2 + 2 = \_\_\_$).
- Automatically responds and takes no conscious effort to activate.
- Used in the Fight, Flight and Freeze response to threats (3Fs).
- Good for making everyday decisions or gut decisions.
- Tied directly to our emotions.
- Creates beliefs (error prone).
- Takes effort to even realize it is active and controlling you.
- Turns on when Brain 2 should and seeks immediate gratification.
- Contagious to others.

**Brain 2**

- Good for driving on ice.
- Reads the fine print.
- Focus on the voice of a particular person in a noisy room.
- Monitor the appropriateness of your behavior in a social situation.
- Answers complex questions.
- Used to work on conscious changes to our body and breathing.
- Used to assess if the threat is a big deal. Calm, cool, collected (3Cs).
- Good for complex decisions or checking complex arguments.
- Tied to our self-awareness.
- Challenges beliefs (reliable).
- Takes effort to turn it on and keep it focused.
- Working it hard can lead to a reduction in self-control.
- Can be convinced by Brain 1.
What brain am I using?
What brain is _____ using?

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Conscious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic</td>
<td>Effortful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best for basic decisions</td>
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<td>Fight, Flight or Freeze</td>
<td>Calm, Cool and Cooperating</td>
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Is this the right time to be using Brain 1?

What can we do to **slow down** and use our Brain 2 to solve this?