



mental wellbeing

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thoughts on thoughts

upwards of 10,000
– 60,000 thoughts
a day

thoughts are
psychoactive - our
state of arousal
influences how
we experience life

our brain does
not distinguish
between the real
and imagined
situation

cognitive dissonance occurs
between our thinking brain
and our emotional brain

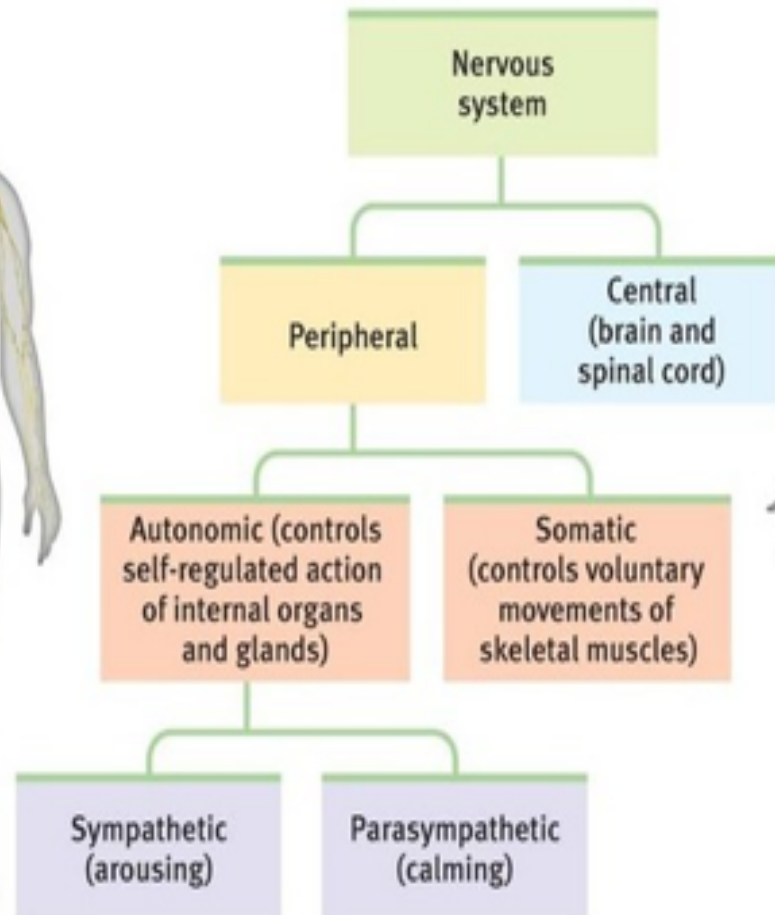
only 20% genuinely
new thoughts

nervous systems

Peripheral nervous system



Central nervous system



stress and anxiety is mediated between our nervous system, brain and endocrine system

stress response starts and ends in our autonomic nervous system (ANS) which is responsible for all sub-cortical processes

it constantly monitors our internal and external environment

stressful situation thoughts promote same reaction as an external threat
switch arousing arm of the ANS

autonomic nervous system - continuum

- parasympathetic or calm

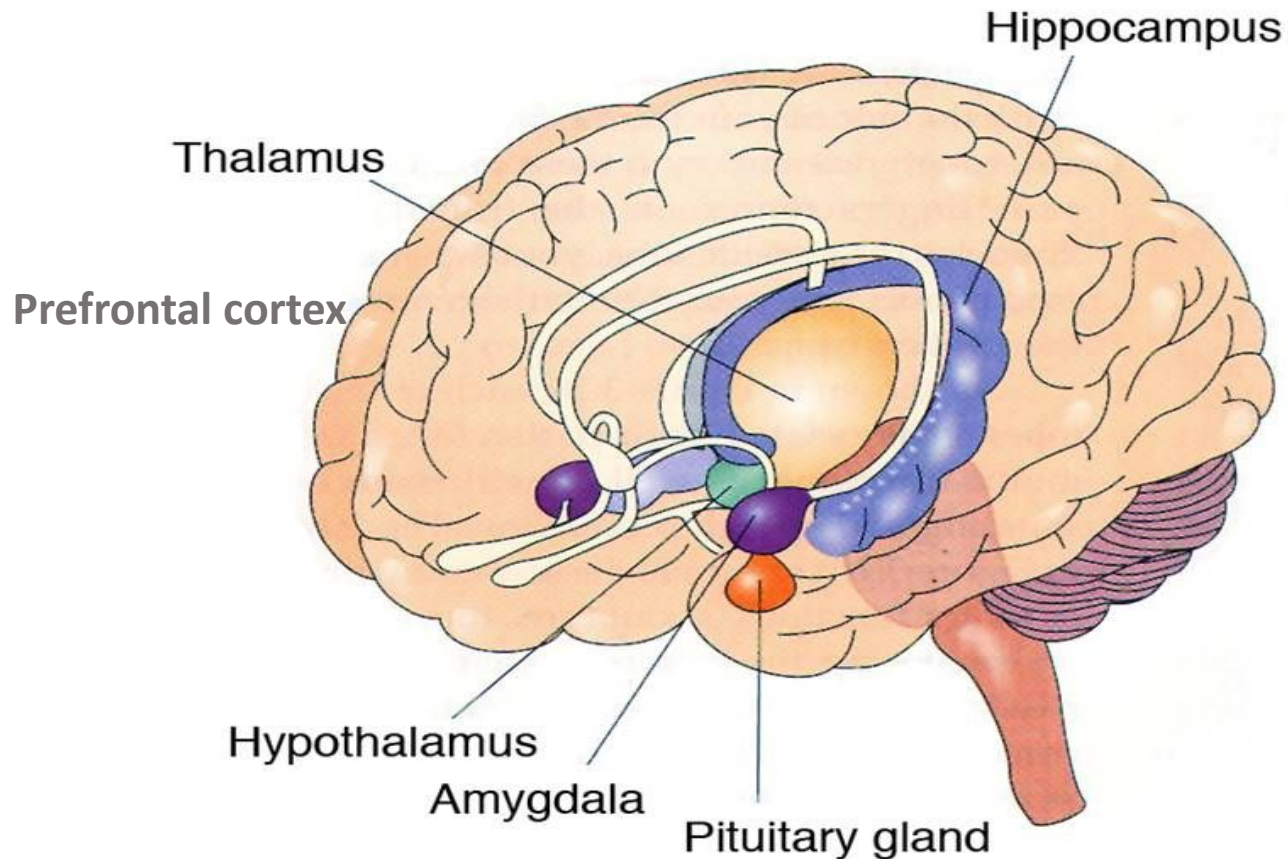
serotonin
oxytocin
GABA

comatose
asleep
drowsy
deep calm
calm and alert

- sympathetic or aroused

aroused
stressed
highly stressed
panic
epinephrine/adrenaline
cortisol
dopamine

brain structures activated during stress



threat signals are sent by the sympathetic ganglion to the thalamus

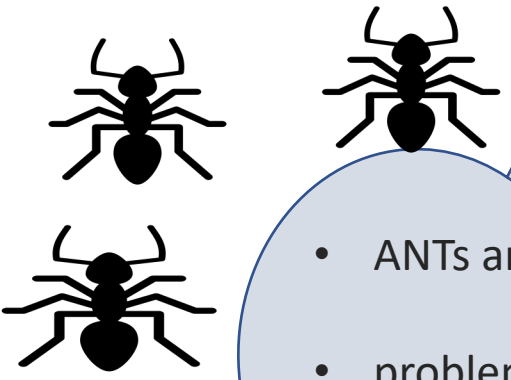
it activates our amygdala which checks in with our hippocampus

stressful thoughts and beliefs activate the hypothalamus pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis, flooding the brain and body with epinephrine/adrenaline and cortisol

keeps us at the alert (sympathetic) end of ANS continuum – chronic stress

causes inflammation and changes a brain structure over time

TROUBLE WITH ANTS (automatic negative thoughts)



- ANTs are everywhere
- problem for most people
- reflexive and unconscious
- cognitive distortions
- like a virus in our computers
- create anxiety



antidote

- awareness
- curiosity
- enquiry
- evidence
- alternatives
- reframe
- self-compassion

Common ANTS

fortune telling

hyper-critical

mindreading

catastrophising

overgeneralisation

Filtering

personalising

perfectionism

polarising

labelling

Compassionate enquiry

- What is the evidence for this thought?
- Is there an alternative explanation?
- What would you say to a friend in these circumstances?
- Is it useful/helpful?

Understand the difference

fear and anxiety

Fear

faced with an actual threat

Anxiety

worry about being faced by an actual
threat

Final thoughts

I've lived through some terrible things in my life, some of which actually happened.”

Mark Twain

Resources

Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy: David D Burns MD

How Your Brain Works: www.hubermanlab.com