

SWITCH ON YOUR BRAIN

• WORKBOOK •

The Key to Peak Happiness,
Thinking, and Health

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Dr. Caroline Leaf, *Switch on Your Brain*
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The information and solutions offered in this book are the result of years of research, practical application, and clinical work. The information in this book is intended to serve as guidelines for managing toxic thoughts, emotions, and bodies, and not as a replacement for professional medical advice or therapy. Please discuss specific symptoms and medical conditions with your doctor. Any use of this information is at the user's discretion. Switch On Your Brain LLC and the author make no representations or warranties that any individual will achieve a particular result. Any and all express or implied warranties, including the warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose, are disclaimed. Switch On Your Brain LLC and the author specifically disclaim any and all liability arising directly or indirectly from the use or application of any information contained in this book.

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Contents

Prologue	7
Introduction	9
KEY 1: Mind Controls Matter	17
KEY 2: Choice and Your Multiple-Perspective Advantage	25
KEY 3: Your Choices Change Your Brain	35
KEY 4: Catch Those Thoughts	45
KEY 5: Entering into Directed Rest	53
KEY 6: Stop Milkshake-Multitasking	61
KEY 7: Thinking, God, and the Quantum Physics Brain	69
KEY 8: The Science of Thought	81
The 21-Day Brain Detox	89
21-Day Detox Worksheet Example	103
Conclusion	107
Recommended Reading	109

Prologue

What would you do if you found a switch that could turn on your brain and enable you to be happier, healthier in your mind and body, more prosperous, and more intelligent? I began my book *Switch On Your Brain* with this simple yet profound question. Of course, we all want to be happier and healthier, but we often do not know how to go about bettering our lives. Millions of books, shows, magazines, and programs promise the key to happiness and success, yet they often fall short of producing true change. We feel great for a few days or weeks, but very soon the circumstances of life come crashing down on us and we once again feel crushed under their weight.

Yet we cannot change anything unless we change our thinking. In *Switch On Your Brain*, I describe how important our mind is for peak health and how our thoughts can impact every area of our lives. Regardless of what happens in our lives, we can *choose* how we react to our circumstances. “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a *sound mind*” (2 Tim. 1:7). We are more than conquerors in Him (Rom. 8:37). We can renew our minds through the help of the Holy Spirit and renew our world (Rom. 12:2). When we start to change our thinking, we can truly transform our lives.

I created this workbook as a guide to help you understand and apply the principles of renewed thinking in *Switch On Your Brain*. Each key follows the chapters in the book, with the science, linked Scripture context, and a

series of questions that will help you understand and apply the principles of renewed thinking in the second part of the book, the 21-Day Brain Detox. Be as specific as you can as you answer the questions, because research shows change will happen when we dig deep to find the root of issues. Once you have completed these questions, there is a discussion section, which will draw on Scripture to help you see the connection between science and the Bible. I would recommend working through the questions and Scripture discussions a second time, after you have completed the workbook and as you use the 21-Day Brain Detox program, which will help you better understand and apply the principles in *Switch On Your Brain*.

I have used multiple translations of the Bible throughout this study guide. If you wish to use a different translation, translate the Scripture yourself, or use multiple versions of the same Scripture, you are more than welcome! Shifting between translations forces us to analyze Scripture from a variety of different viewpoints, which increases mind health.

At the end of the workbook, there is a recommended reading list for those who wish to dig deeper into the key points I have written about in *Switch On Your Brain* and this workbook. There are two sections: science/philosophy and theology/philosophy. Many of these sources can be found in the bibliography and notes in *Switch On Your Brain*, but I have highlighted the most important books and articles and added a few new sources I have researched since writing *Switch On Your Brain* in 2013.

Of course, the crucial principle to remember as you go through this workbook, as well as the book and the twenty-one-day program, is that change only occurs when we *want* to change. Although this may sound redundant, I have come across many people in my practice and my travels who like the idea of changing the way they think and transforming their lives but are not desperate enough to truly change. God has given us the incredible gift of free will, and it is up to us how we use it. We can *choose* life or death (Deut. 30:19).

No one can change your thinking—and your life—except *you*.

Introduction

See pages 19–28 in *Switch On Your Brain*.

Main Scripture: Faith is the substance of things *hoped* for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1)

Linked Science Concept: Thoughts are real, physical things that occupy mental real estate. Moment by moment, every day, you are changing the structure of your brain through your thinking. When we *hope*, it is an activity of the mind that changes the structure of our brain in a positive and normal direction.

1. *It was only a few decades ago that scientists considered the brain to be a fixed and hardwired machine. This view saw the damaged brain as incurable and the focus was compensation, not restoration of function.* How do these theories shape the way we view humanity? How does this way of thinking impact our view of free will and our ability to change? Does this impact the way we view human responsibility for our choices?

2. *We can change the physical nature of our brain through our thinking and choosing.* If we can change our thinking, what does it mean to renew our minds and take every thought captive unto Christ (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 10:5)?

3. *As we consciously direct our thinking, we can wire out toxic patterns of thinking and replace them with healthy thoughts. New thought networks grow. We increase our intelligence and bring healing to our minds and physical bodies.* If you can wire out toxic patterns of thinking and grow new, healthy thought networks, what role do your own choices play in your healing, both mentally and physically? How does this change your view of free will and your ability to choose life or death (Deut. 30:19)?

4. *It all starts in the realm of the mind, with our ability to think and choose—the most powerful thing in the universe after God.* If we are created in the image of God, with the ability to make choices that impact not only us but also everyone around us and the world we live in, what sense of responsibility and stewardship do you feel (Gen. 1–2)? Are you aware of how powerful your mind is?

5. *Neuroplasticity, by definition, means the brain is malleable and adaptable, changing moment by moment every day.* Do you recognize how hopeful this discovery is? What does it mean to you to be able to change your mind and your life?

6. *Scientists are finally beginning to see the brain as having renewable characteristics (Rom. 12:2).* Do you see how science and the Bible are not necessarily at odds? What do you feel about science's role in society and the Christian way of life?

7. *Science is hovering on a precipice as we recognize the responsibility and impact of our thinking and the resultant choices we make, which have ramifications right down to the ways in which the genes of our bodies express themselves.* Now that you know more about the mind and brain, how do you feel about this responsibility? Do you see how important it is to use our minds to think on good and holy things (Phil. 4:8)? How do you see yourself starting to use your mind to make a positive impact on the world around you?

8. *Neurogenesis is the birth of new baby nerve cells.* How does this expand your view of God’s mercy and grace? Read Lamentations 3:22–23; how do you see his mercies in light of your brain’s ability to change and grow new nerve cells?

DISCUSSION

In light of the information in this chapter focusing on the hope that science gives us alongside Scripture, discuss the following Scriptures:

1. **Psalm 42:11 (NIV):** “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your *hope* in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”
2. **Psalm 119:114 (NIV):** “You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my *hope* in your word.”
3. **Romans 15:13 (NIV):** “May the God of *hope* fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”
4. **Hebrews 10:23 (NIV):** “Let us hold unswervingly to the *hope* we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”
5. **1 Peter 1:3 (NIV):** “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a *living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Write your conclusions from the discussion of these Scriptures linked to the eight scientific points above:

KEY 1

Mind Controls Matter

See pages 31–38 in *Switch On Your Brain*.

Main Scripture: God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of *love* and of a sound mind. (2 Tim. 1:7)

Linked Science Concept: Science shows we are wired for *love* with a natural optimism bias. This means exactly what the Scripture says above.

1. *The debate in science is between the mind being what the brain does versus the brain doing the bidding of the mind.* How do you see each side of this debate in light of your faith and what you have read in *Switch On Your Brain*?

2. *The correct view is that the mind is designed to control the body, of which the brain is a part, not the other way around.* If you can control your brain, how much responsibility and power do you have? Do you see how your thoughts can and do impact not only you but everyone and everything around you?

3. *Our brain does not control us; we control our brain through our thinking and choosing.* What does this mean for how we choose to think and act?

4. *We can control our reactions to anything.* Did you ever find yourself in a situation where you knew how to react but you chose to follow your desires? How did this make you feel? What happened? Do you try to learn from such experiences and react better in the future? How do you usually try to do this?

5. *Choices are real. You are free to make choices about how you focus your attention, and this affects how the chemicals, proteins, and wiring of your brain change and function.* Imagine the chemicals, proteins, and wiring of your brain changing as you think new thoughts. How does this make you feel? Does this knowledge empower you and encourage you to change the way you think?

6. *Research shows that DNA actually changes shape in response to our thoughts.* Imagine this change occurring. Do you see how powerful your thoughts are? Do you see the creative power you have in your mind, which is made in the image of the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16)?

7. *Stress stage one is normal. Stress stage two and stage three, on the other hand, are our mind and body's response to toxic thinking—basically normal stress gone wrong.* You need to become aware of when you are stressed and how you react to stress. Think back to the last time you went through a trying situation. How did you react? Was it healthy stress or toxic stress?

8. *Reaction is the key word here. You cannot control the events or circumstances of your life, but you can control your reactions.* Think about a recent issue you faced, and your reactions. How could you have reacted differently?

DISCUSSION

In light of the information in this chapter, discuss the following Scriptures:

1. **Isaiah 26:3 (ESV):** “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”
2. **Romans 12:1–2 (ESV):** “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
3. **Proverbs 4:23 (ESV):** “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”
4. **Ephesians 4:22–24 (ESV):** “To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the *spirit of your minds*, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”
5. **Deuteronomy 30:19 (ESV):** “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live.”

Write your conclusions from the discussion of these Scriptures linked to the eight scientific points above:

