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## **Is Anxiety Neurological? Yes and No, but it works to your advantage.**

I recently watched a documentary which reinforced something that is now accepted by many neurologists. I'll come back to this in a moment.

But first I want to talk about what was important for panic attack sufferers that was revealed in this documentary. Many folks featured had suffered very serious strokes and others even lost a limb. The idea of much improvement for these folks initially seemed quite poor; however, things began to look up for these folks.

Why?

Because the medical doctors who'd treated these patients had the patients using technology and completing exercises that would seem impossible for someone who'd suffered a stroke, list or limb. For example, there was a person featured who was missing half her brain! And this person was still able to bring an amazing number of things considering she was missing hand her brain – because of the interventions.

The amazing thing is that by completing exercises that would allow the patients to imagine either their hand was there (which now gone) or having stroke victims complete exercises that would normally require use of an area of their brain (now damaged by the stroke and inhibiting function) they were able to learn to do the exercises and their brains actually rewired.

I'm not talking about science fiction.

I'm talking about something called "Neuroplasticity".

Neuroplasticity refers to the changing of neurons and the organization of their networks and so their function by experience. In plain English: the changing of the human brain. The brain can change and rewire so that lost fuctions can be restored or victims who'd lost their arm can get rid of "phantom limb" problems (the feeling and pain that appears to originate in the arm that is now gone).

How does this all relate to anxiety, panic attacks and agoraphobia?

Page 1 of 2

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Well, one of the doctors in the documentary discussed that the brain is always changing and that thinking changes the brain, so it is important to focus your thoughts so that you can control the direction of change.

An important implication is that by controlling your thoughts – for example through the use of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and by other techniques offered throughout this newsletter and by working with a good psychologist can indeed produce changes in the brain.

I discuss things like this documentary because I believe it's helpful for the panic attack sufferer to have evidence about the things that can benefit us such as CBT. Moreover, I hope it encourages you to do CBT on a regular basis and there is one more important implication: even if you feel a little hesitant about CBT or about some of the alternative thoughts you generate by doing CBT at first, knowing that beginning to generate thoughts that are free from cognitive distortions, more realistic and generally more positive, actually has a benefit on your brain chemistry should serve as a good incentive.

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