

5 Little-Known Neuroscience Insights That Will Make You a Better Coach



The Neuroscience School

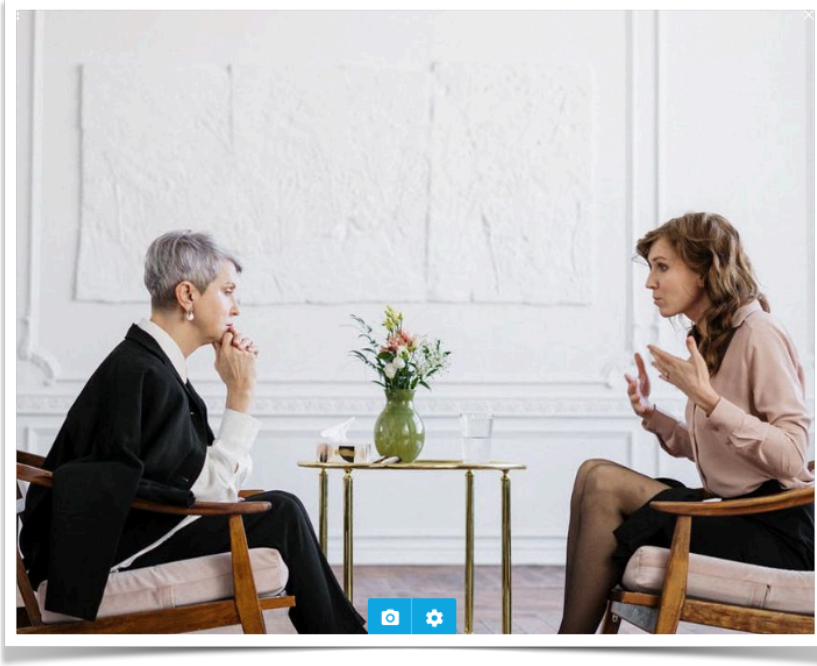
1. Procrastination is not about avoiding work

2. Your brain makes communication difficult

3. "Managing" stress can make stress worse

4. Your clients can't progress until they do this

5. You might be keeping your clients from creating change



1. Procrastination is not about avoiding work

Procrastination is not about avoiding work. It's about avoiding a negative emotion, often stress or fear.

Here are two quick ways to overcome procrastination:

1. Forgive yourself. People who forgive themselves for procrastinating are less likely to procrastinate on their next task. Procrastinators are really hard on themselves to begin with. They're often perfectionists.
2. Break things down into small steps: How small? Small enough so that the task is less scary.



2. Your brain makes communication difficult

We hear what we expect to hear. Which is why good communication skills are hard to acquire.

That's because the brain doesn't code for sounds we expect. It only codes for sounds we don't expect.

Hearing what we expect to hear isn't a weakness: It's how our brains work. To be good a communicator, we need to **pay close attention to what our conversation partner is saying**. When we're thinking about what to say next, we're not hearing what our conversation partner is saying, no matter how well we think we're listening.



3. "Managing" stress can make stress worse

People apply the word "stress" to simple annoyances and irritants. When we label mundane experiences as stressful, we effectively turn them into a state. This is how we create chronic stress, with all its negative health consequences.

Here's a Google chart of how our use of the word "stress" has increased over time:



Using different words, such as "irritating," "annoying," or "busy" to label an experience changes our emotional reaction to the it. We've taken it from a state to a temporary emotion. And it reduces the activation in the amygdala, a brain region which processes fear and anxiety. Simply "managing" stress doesn't change it from a state to a temporary emotion.

4. Your clients can't progress until they do this

Many clients come to coaching with shame about things they have done in the past. They blame themselves for the way they are today. Shame keeps them stuck and prevents meaningful change. That's because their brain's energy is stuck in the shackles of shame.

The antidote to shame is compassion. Not something coaches often think about, right?

Having compassion for the client and helping them acquire compassion for themselves frees the client from the shackles of shame. We saw how self forgiveness can free us from procrastination. Self-compassion frees up brain energy to create meaningful change.

5. You might be keeping your clients from creating change

If your client comes into the coaching session stressed, their focus is on their stress and it's difficult to get any meaningful work done.

How can you help your client calm down and focus?

Emotions are contagious. This is called emotional contagion. Have you ever been in a room full of people and someone with negative energy enters the room? They suck the energy right out of the room.

Here are two quick ways to calm down your client:

1. Use emotional contagion to your advantage. If you maintain a calm demeanour, you can pull them out of their stressful state of mind and into a more calm state of mind.
2. Slow down your breathing and your client will follow. Slow breathing deactivates the brain and body's stress response and activates the relaxation response.

