

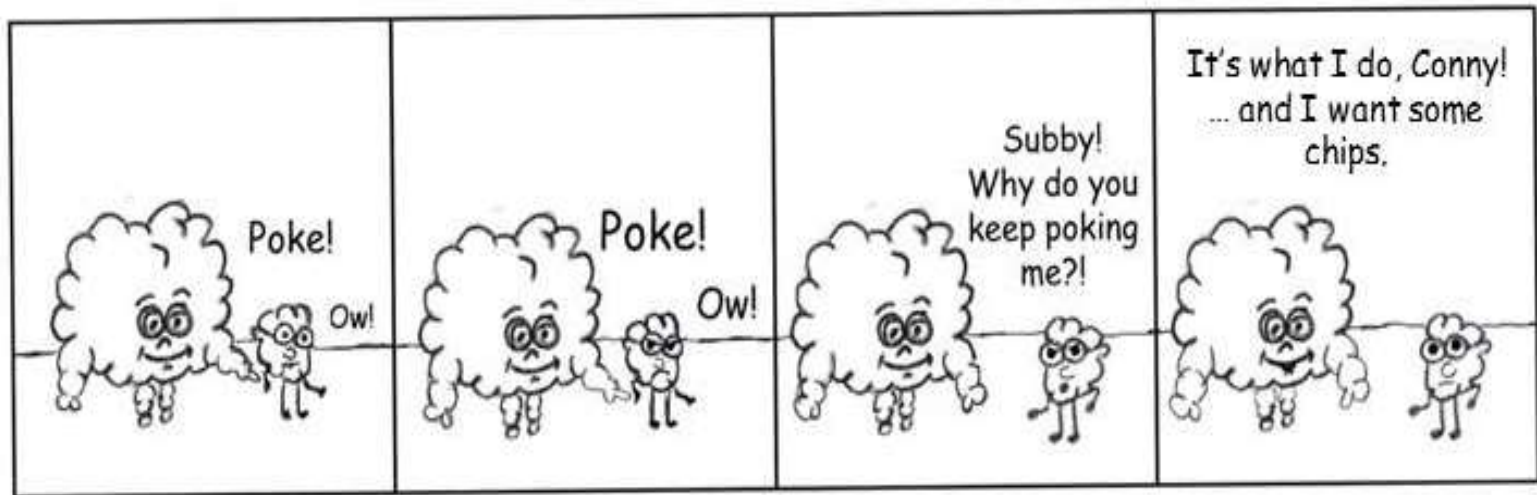


# Taming the Survival Instinct

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# Emotions are **MESSAGES** from Your Brain

The subconscious brain (“Subby”) messages the conscious brain (“Conny”) with emotion.



# Painful Emotion Messages come from 2 Sources

## #1: Unmet needs

*“I’m lonely! Here’s some ‘OW OW OW’  
until you solve this!”* – Subby (aka Your Brain)

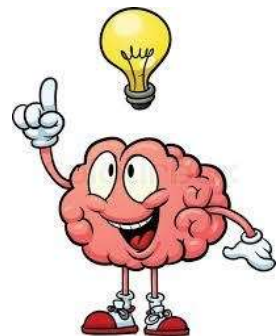


## #2: Unhealthy beliefs

*“I’m not good enough. That’s shameful so here’s  
some painful shame sensations for you!”* – Subby

# Where do Unhealthy Beliefs Come From?

- ▶ The brain **interprets** our experiences and creates beliefs (aka rules)
- ▶ Our survival oriented brain errs on the side of caution and makes mistakes when it does so
  - *E.g., what happens when a big white dog in a park bites you?*
- ▶ Personal example: friendship belief



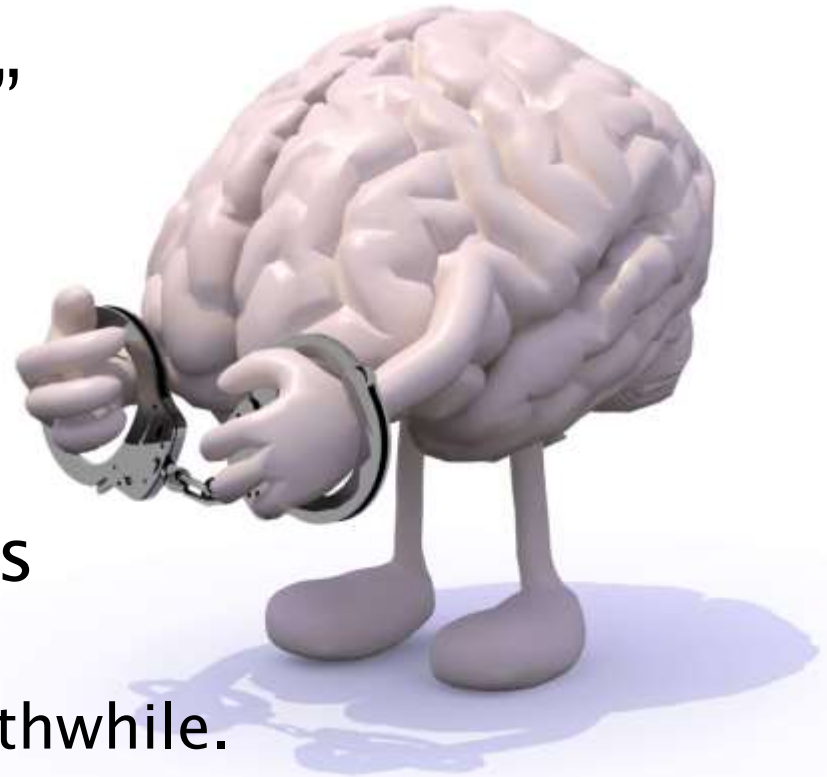
# People Have Similar Unhealthy Beliefs

## ▶ “Self-Defeating Beliefs”

- David Burns M.D,
- “Feeling Good Handbook”
- Feeling Good Podcast

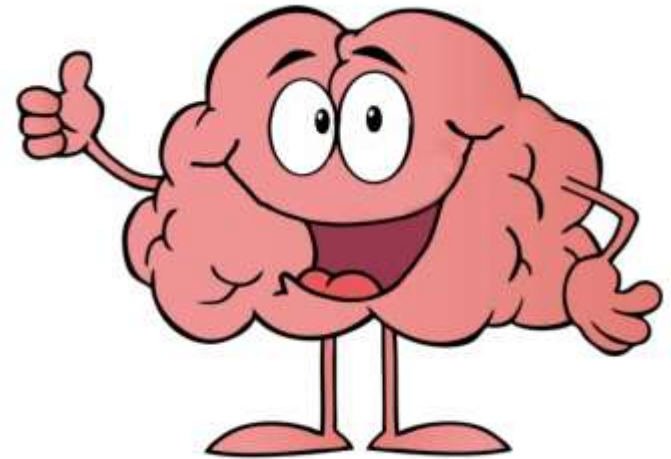
## ▶ Common unhealthy beliefs

- I’m not good enough.
- I have to be perfect to be worthwhile.
- People are looking down on me.
- If I worry enough, everything will turn out okay.



# The Brain Resists Changing Beliefs Because The Brain Thinks It Is Protecting Us

*“This belief will help  
you survive!”*



– Your Brain

Our beliefs were put in place for our safety. The brain fights us if we want to change them.

# *“I have to be perfect to be worthwhile”*

- ▶ Motivates me to try to be perfect
  - If I'm perfect, then the people who are criticizing or abusing me will love me instead. That means they won't kick me out of the group; that means I'll be safe.
- ▶ Makes me feel ashamed that I'm not better
  - Shame encourages us to submit and hide; hiding is a good strategy in a dangerous world; it keeps me out of sight of aggressive group members

# So How Do We Get Subby to Let Go?



Jane:

*“I’m going to be  
alone forever  
because I’m not  
good enough.”*



# Step 1: Validation ONLY

**DO NOT  
TRY TO  
CHANGE  
HOW JANE  
FEELS!**



# Validating Jane



*“I’m going to be alone forever because I’m not good enough.”*

*“I think I heard you say ...”*

*“Your pain makes sense.”*

*“It sounds very painful.”*

*“Tell me more.”*



## Step 2: Honoring the Unhealthy Belief



Subby is trying to PROTECT Jane with the belief “*I’m going to be alone forever because I’m not good enough*”.

Subby is also honoring some of Jane’s values in this belief.



# How Is This Belief Protecting Jane and Reflecting Her Good Values?

*"I'm going to be alone forever because I'm not good enough."*

Jane's belief stops her from trying to find a partner which means she is protected from:

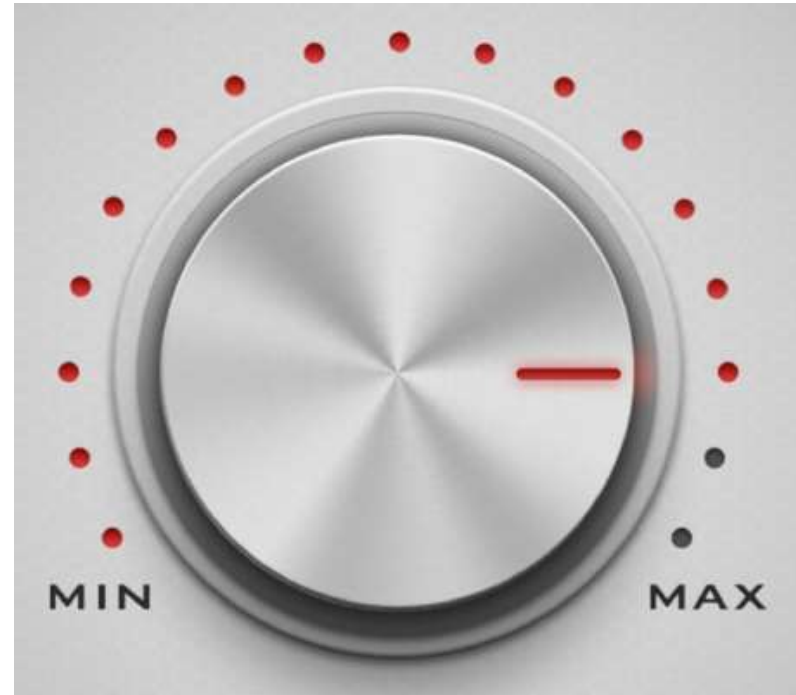
- ▶ *The pain of rejection in the dating scene.*
- ▶ *The pain of disappointment in herself.*
- ▶ *The pain of a future failed relationship.*

Jane's belief shows some of her truly wonderful values, such as:

- ▶ *Humility ("I'm nothing special")*
- ▶ *Realism ("I am not afraid to face the truth of my situation")*
- ▶ *Thinking highly of others ("Other people are much better than me")*

# Step 3: Decision Time – Are You Sure You Want To Release This Belief?

To keep Subby happy, we sometimes choose to only release some of the pain.  
*We Dial It Down.*



NOW the brain will finally let us help Jane.



# Step 4: Help Your Brain See the Lies in the Unhealthy Belief

I believe  
this  
100%



*I 'm going to be alone forever because  
I'm not good enough*

- ▶ Unhealthy beliefs contain lies. Those lies trap emotional pain.
- ▶ Force your brain to live in the truth – that is the path to peace.

Truth Seeking Strategy #1:  
Find the Thinking Traps

# Common Thinking Traps

- ▶ Mind-reading  
“Everyone thinks I’m a terrible parent”
- ▶ Emotional Reasoning  
“I feel like a loser.”  
(therefore I must be a loser)
- ▶ Fortune-telling  
“If my son goes away to college, he’ll get into trouble and make a mess of his life.”



*“I’m going to be alone forever because I’m not good enough.”*

# Truth Seeking Strategy #2: Define the Terms



*“I’m going to be alone forever because I’m not good enough.”*

- Ask Subby: *“Please define ‘good enough’”*
- E.g. not attractive enough, not smart enough, not successful enough, ...
- How attractive/smart/successful is required?
- Do I have to be it 24/7?
- What about babies? Are they born not good enough because they aren’t attractive/smart/successful?



# Jane's Pushback on Subby So Far

## Unhealthy Belief:

*"I'm going to be alone forever because I'm not good enough."*

After Thinking Traps Strategy

*I can't predict the future. I don't know if I'll be alone forever.*

*Just because I feel "not good enough" doesn't mean it's true. That's emotional reasoning and it isn't valid.*

After Define the Terms Strategy

*I don't believe I'm not good enough. That doesn't really make sense once you look at it. But I am afraid that I don't have the skills to attract a good partner and to create a healthy relationship.*

I still believe it 30%



# Truth Seeking Strategy #3: Talk to a Friend

Pretend this is your friend's story and she is a clone of you.



She says to you *“I’m going to be alone forever because I’m not good enough. That’s true, isn’t it Jane?”*

What will you say back? Be honest with her!



# How Believable Is It Now?



I don't  
believe  
this  
anymore

*"I'm going to be alone forever because I'm not good enough."*

- ▶ *Jane's new HEALTHY belief:*
  - *Everyone is born good enough and even murderers find love. If they can find love, then I certainly am good enough to be loved. I'm scared to date and scared of rejection but that's normal. I'm also worried I might screw up my next relationship, but that says nothing about "good enough". I'll just learn from Karin how to do relationships right and get help if I start feeling stuck. No one could ask more from a partner than that.*

# Taming the Survival Brain

The truth will  
set you free.



*“I don’t take my personality too seriously anymore. I treat it more like a pet.”*

– Buddhist monk

# The Path to Outer Peace

- ▶ Subby means well but is a terrible driver
- ▶ Let Conny do the driving and the world will have more peace

