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Practicing Yoga Nidra can help retrain your brain

Here's how:

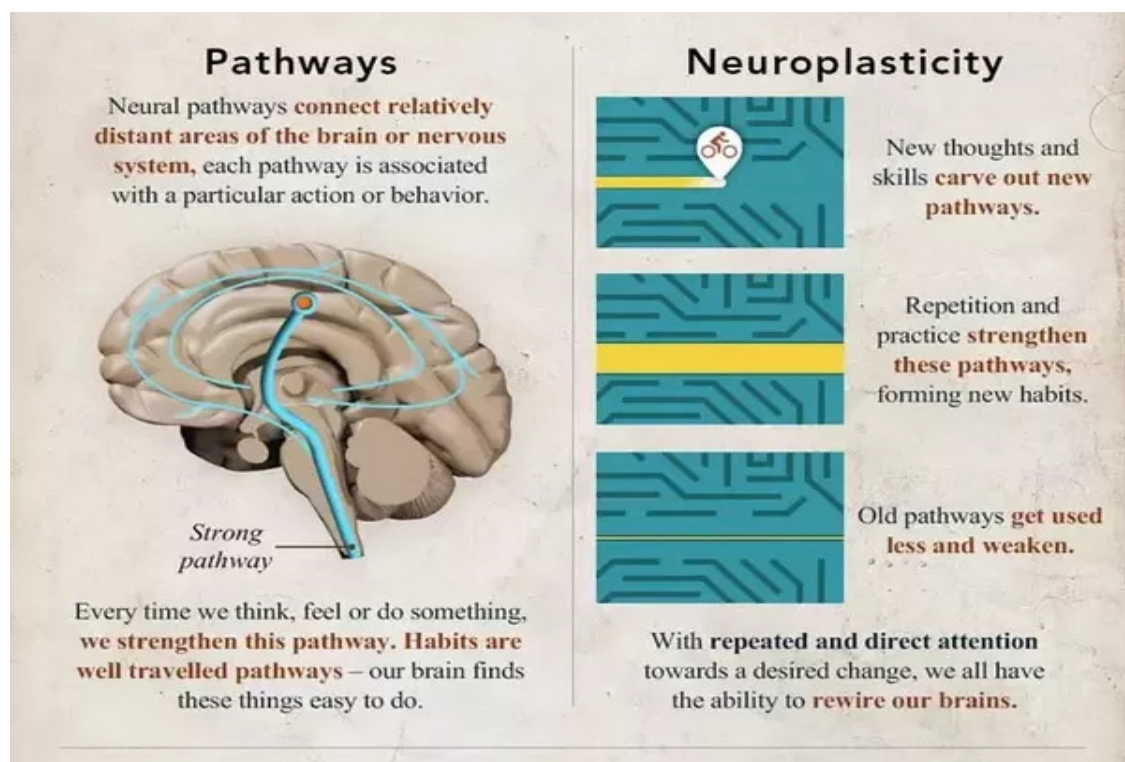
Neuroplasticity

Neuro = the brain; Plasticity = plastic or flexible

Neuroplasticity: The brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life.

Up until only recently, the medical community believed the brain grew and changed only until the age of 18. Then, it was a fixed structure and it was all down hill from there.

Now it is believed that the brain is flexible and capable of change given the stimulus to do so. The brain needs change. For example, clasp your hands together; notice which thumb is on top. This is your normal pattern. Now clasp your hands with the other thumb on top. How does it feel? Maybe a little strange? This is a new pattern. One the brain isn't used to. You can do the same with crossing your legs. Which one do you prefer on top? Try the other way. See how it feels. If you were to just clasp your hands and cross your legs differently for the next two weeks you will change your brain.



In Yoga Nidra, the practitioner is asked to make a Sankalpa or Intention. This is a short positive statement made in the present tense. For example, one might say "I am vibrantly healthy." This is a tool the practitioner uses to effectively re-wire their own brain. It is a powerful way to change habits, and old thinking patterns or beliefs. The first step is to observe yourself. Notice your habits and patterns. Then notice a behavior, belief or sensation that no longer serves your desired state of being. Choose wisely. Then think about what you would like to happen in its place. If, for example, you are in a state of chronic pain, you might choose to say to yourself, "I go through my day with ease." As you can see, the statement doesn't necessarily have to be true at that time, but it must be made in the present tense for the mind to make that change take place. After consistent daily repetitions, the mind has the ability to re-structure the physical brain and help make those changes take place.