

THE BIG IDEAS

The New You
It's time to say, "Hi!"

The River of Change
Let's cross it.

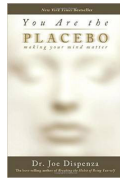
Epigenetic Engineer
That's you!

Mental Rehearsal
Is a key practice.

Gratitude
For things to come.

Your Subconscious Mind
Open the door.

Greatness
Our lives are our initiations.



You Are the Placebo

Making Your Mind Matter

BY DR. JOE DISPENZA · HAY HOUSE © 2014 · 392 PAGES

“The incredible results I’ve seen in the advanced workshops I offer and all the scientific data that has come out of that have led me to the idea of the *placebo*: how people can take a sugar pill or get a saline injection and then their belief in something outside of themselves makes them get better.

I began to ask myself, ‘What if people begin to believe in *themselves* instead of something outside of themselves? What if they believe that they can change something inside of them and move themselves to the same state of being as someone who’s taking a placebo? Isn’t that what our workshop participants have been doing in order to get better? Do people really need a pill or injection to change their state of being? Can we teach people to accomplish the same thing by teaching them how the placebo really works?’

And that’s really what this book is about: empowering you to realize that you have all the biological and neurological machinery to do exactly that. My goal is to demystify these concepts within the new science of the way things really are so that it is within the reach of more people to change their internal states in order to create positive changes in their health and in their external world. If that sounds too amazing to be true, then as I’ve said, toward the end of the book you’ll see some of the research compiled from our workshops to show you exactly how it’s possible.”

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza from *You Are the Placebo*

“As Cousins said of placebos back in 1979, ‘The process works not because of any magic in the tablet, but because the human body is its own best apothecary and because the most successful prescriptions are filled by the body itself.’”

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

The placebo effect.

It’s a powerful scientific fact that, when people THINK they will get benefit from a pill or procedure, they often experience those benefits even if they’re simply taking a sugar pill.

Dr. Joe Dispenza’s question: What if we didn’t need something *outside* of ourselves to trigger the benefits of the placebo effect?

This book is his answer to that question. Quit simply, you *don’t* need something outside yourself—just a firm belief in the possibilities matched with an equally strong resolve to do the work to create the conditions for change.

In short: You *are* the placebo.

Joe presents a truly fascinating read—mixing neuroscience and quantum physics with stories of miraculous healings (and bizarre deaths) from the past and present. My book is peppered with “wow”s. (Get the book [here](#).)

For now, let’s take a quick look at some of my favorite Big Ideas!

"In order to change your life, you have to literally become someone else."

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

THE NEW YOU

"If this is your personality then *your personality creates your personal reality*. It's that simple. And your personality is made up of how you *think*, how you *act*, and how you *feel*. So the present personality who is reading this page has created the present reality called your life; and that also means that if you want to create a new personal reality—a new life—then you have to begin to examine or think about the thoughts you've been thinking and change them. You must become conscious of the unconscious behaviors you've been choosing to demonstrate that have led to the same experiences, and then you must make new choices, take new actions, and create new experiences."

Want a new personal reality?

Then it's time to create a new personality.

The fact is that if we continue to have the same thoughts, make the same choices, take the same actions and experience the same feelings nothing will change. Pretty straightforward, right?

Again: A new personal reality requires a new personality.

We need to change how we THINK, how we ACT and how we FEEL.

We need to make our currently unconscious thoughts, actions and feelings *conscious*. We need to deliberately (and repeatedly) make *new* choices—choosing to act, think, and feel in ways consistent with the new reality we're committed to creating.

Joe walks us through the neuroscience of how we create a new identity. It's fascinating.

He tells us that continuing to think/behavior/feel in the old ways leads to "neuroridity"—reinforcing the old patterns again and again and again. We want to tap into the power of *neuroplasticity*. That's where the magic is.

Joe tells us: "When you learn new things and begin to think in new ways, you are making your brain fire in different sequences, patterns and combinations. That is, you are activating many diverse networks of neurons in different ways. And whenever you make your brain work differently, you're changing your mind. As you begin to think outside the box, new thoughts should lead to new choices, new behaviors, new experiences and new emotions. Now your identity is also changing."

CROSSING THE RIVER OF CHANGE

"Crossing the river of change requires that you leave the same familiar predictable self—connected to the same thoughts, same choices, same behaviors, and same feelings—and step into a void of the unknown. The gap between the old self and the new self is the biological death of your old personality. If the old self must die, then you have to create a new self with new thoughts, new choices, new behaviors, and new emotions. Entering this river is stepping toward a new unpredictable, unfamiliar self. The unknown is the only place where you can create—you cannot create anything new from the known."

The River of Change.

That's what we need to cross if we want to move from our old identity to the new.

And guess what? That's scary. (Hah!)

Joe tells us that when we commit to being a new version of ourselves—choosing new thoughts, behaviors and emotions—we feel uncomfortable. It doesn't feel "normal" and we don't feel like ourselves for the very simple reason that we *aren't* being our old selves.

Now, when most people feel that discomfort, they want to immediately go back to their old ways.

"A new personality ultimately creates a new personal reality."

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

"Some people call this experience the dark night of the soul. It's the phoenix igniting itself and burning to ashes. The old self has to die for a new one to be reborn. Of course that feels uncomfortable!"

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

We need to have awareness to see what's happening—that we've stepped into the river of change and that the uncomfortable feelings are normal and to be expected. Then we need to have the courage to get to the other side of the river—to become our new selves by diligently, patiently and persistently making our new choices and grooving new neural patterns of thought, behavior, and emotion.

We LITERALLY need to die to the old neurological/biological self and be born into the new.

Powerful stuff.

It's very much like Campbell's hero's journey. We need to be willing to leave the comfort of the known and venture into the forest of the unknown. As Campbell tells us, we can't have a resurrection without a crucifixion. Nietzsche tells us that the snake that cannot shed its skin must perish.

Joe echoes this wisdom: "Some people call this experience the dark night of the soul. It's the phoenix igniting itself and burning to ashes. The old self has to die for a new one to be reborn. Of course that feels uncomfortable!"

Here's to the phoenix igniting itself and rising from its own ashes!!

(Let's do this! :)

IT'S TIME TO BECOME AN EPIGENETIC ENGINEER

"The word *epigenetics* literally means "above the genes." It refers to the control of genes not from within the DNA itself but from messages coming from outside the cell—in other words, from the environment...

Epigenetics teaches that we, indeed, are *not* doomed by our genes and that a change in human consciousness can produce physical changes, both in structure and function, in the human body. We can modify our genetic destiny by turning on the genes we want and turning off the ones we don't want through working with the various factors in the environment that program our genes. Some of those signals come from within the body, such as feelings and thoughts, while others come from the body's response to the external environment, such as pollution or sunlight...

Epigenetics suggests that even though our DNA code never changes, thousands of combinations, sequences, and patterned variations in a single gene are possible (just as thousands of combinations, sequences, and patterns of neural networks are possible in the brain)."

Epigenetics.

The word literally means "above the genes."

Truly extraordinary stuff.

Until very recently, scientists believed that our genetic code was fixed. We now know that, although the DNA code itself never changes, our thoughts and behaviors and environment can "turn on" or "turn off" different sequences in the code—resulting in extraordinarily different EXPRESSIONS of that genetic code.

The most powerful way to see this simple fact in action is to look at genetically identical twins later in life. If their genetic code PREDETERMINED outcomes, the twins should look identical at 90 years old like they did at 9 days old, right? They should suffer from the same illnesses, etc.

But that's not the case. Research reveals again and again that identical twins can have the exact same genetic code, but very different outcomes.

Why? Because they made different lifestyle decisions throughout their lives. The little things like what they ate, what they thought and what they did accumulated. Decades and decades of tiny little (epigenetic) tweaks to their genes led to dramatically different results.

"The second study, conducted in 2013, found that eliciting the relaxation response produces changes in gene expression after just one session of meditation among both novices and experienced practitioners alike."

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

" Now you can understand that whether it's joyful or stressful, with every thought you think, every emotion you feel, and every event you experience, you're acting as an epigenetic engineer of your own cells. You control your destiny."

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

Now, what's really cool is that you don't need to wait decades to see the results.

Research unequivocally shows that we can change our genetic expression in a matter of months (and even after just one session of meditation). (<—That's awesome.)

This is at the heart of how you are, in fact, the placebo.

By KNOWING that you can change your life and underlying neuronal structure and genetic expression while engaging in new thoughts, behaviors and emotions, you can dramatically change your life.

Joe puts it beautifully: "Now you can understand that whether it's joyful or stressful, with every thought you think, every emotion you feel, and every event you experience, you're acting as an epigenetic engineer of your own cells. You control your destiny."

Here's to standing above our genes and engineering their optimization!

MENTAL REHEARSAL

"This is possible through *mental rehearsal*. This technique is basically closing your eyes and repeatedly imagining performing an action, and mentally reviewing the future you want, all the while reminding yourself of who you no longer want to be (the old self) and who you *do* want to be. This process involves thinking about your future actions, mentally planning your choices, and focusing your mind on the new experience...

By keeping your focus on this future event and not letting any other thoughts distract you, in a matter of moments, you turn down the volume on the neural circuits connected to the old self, which begins to turn off the old genes, and you fire and wire new neural circuits, which initiates the right signals to activate new genes in new ways. Thanks to the neuroplasticity discussed previously, the circuits in your brain begin to reorganize themselves to reflect what you're mentally rehearsing. And as you keep coupling your new thoughts and mental images with that strong, positive emotion, then your mind and body are working together—and you're now in a new state of being.

At this point, your brain and body are no longer a record of the past; they are a map to the future—a future that you've created in your mind. Your thoughts have become your experience, and you just became the placebo."

All of that is so good.

Short story: If we want to become epigenetic engineers of our destiny, we need to practice mental rehearsal—imagining our ideal behaviors and futures with strong emotions such as gratitude and joy.

Over the last couple months, I've read nearly all of the top [mental training](#)/peak performance sports books out there. (Check out Notes on [Mind Gym](#), [With Winning in Mind](#), [The Art of Mental Training](#), [Unbeatable Mind](#).)

They ALL talk about the importance of mentally rehearsing your ideal performances and outcomes. It's awesome to see Joe refer to stories of extraordinary athletes and performers who practice mental rehearsal while unpacking the science behind why this practice is so effective.

So, how's *your* mental rehearsal?

What's your ideal scene look like? Who are you? What are you doing? What's your life look like?

Imagine that intensely. With emotion. Often.

As we do this, we're re-wiring our brains—"pruning" the old neural patterns and "sprouting" the new goodness while flipping our epigenetic switches to the positive. (= Good!)

" There are two times daily that are the most conducive to meditation: right before you go to bed at night and right after you get up in the morning."

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

"By focusing more on what you do want and less on what you don't want, you can call into existence whatever you desire and simultaneously "fade away" what you don't want by no longer giving it your attention."

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

GRATITUDE FOR THINGS TO COME

"On the other hand, emotions like gratitude and appreciation open your heart and lift the energy in your body to a new place—out of the lower hormonal centers. Gratitude is one of the most powerful emotions for increasing your level of suggestibility. It teaches your body emotionally that the event you're grateful for has *already happened*, because we usually give thanks *after* a desirable event has occurred.

If you bring up the emotion of gratitude *before* the actual event, your body (as the unconscious mind) will begin to believe that the future event has indeed already happened—or is happening to you in the present moment. Gratitude, therefore, is the ultimate state of receivership."

Gratitude. We talk about this a lot because the science so clearly captures its power to boost our happiness and overall well-being. It's literally magical.

But we tend to be grateful for things that are *already* in our lives. What if we were grateful for things BEFORE they actually show up?

Joe tells us this is one of the most powerful ways to help reprogram our realities. He shares this wisdom in a chapter called "Suggestibility" where he walks us through the fascinating science of hypnotism and placebo (along with some truly incredible stories). Basically, the more "suggestible" someone is, the more likely they can be hypnotized and the more likely the placebo will be able to take hold.

And... Gratitude is a REALLY powerful way to increase our suggestibility. So, what future wonderful things are you grateful for? :)

OPEN THE DOOR TO YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

"If meditation is about entering the autonomic system so that we can become more suggestible and overcome the challenges just mentioned, then we need to know how to get there. The short answer is that we get there on a brain wave. The brain state we happen to be in at any given time has a huge effect on how suggestible we are at that moment."

Want to access your subconscious mind to do some serious re-programming? Awesome. Get there by riding a brain wave.

Specifically, drop down out of super active beta-mode into a more mellow alpha into an even more mellow theta—which Joe tells us is "*the key to your own subconscious kingdom.*"

Joe walks us through the fact that our biggest barrier to re-programming ourselves is an overactive analytical mind. In short, if we're overthinking and constantly bombarding ourselves with stimuli, we're going to make it more challenging to drop into the zone we need to be in to reprogram effectively.

Which happens to be EXACTLY what [Timothy Gallwey](#) says in his classic mental training guide, [The Inner Game of Tennis](#). I worked on that Note yesterday and I just love it when two great teachers, in such apparently different domains, say the exact same thing.

Timothy's primary thesis is that we have two selves: Self 1 + Self 2. Self 1 is the conscious, thinking mind. Self 2 is the subconscious, supercomputer genius doing mind. We basically need to trust Self 2 to work its magic if we want to crush it in tennis or life.

His primary advice on how to do that is simple: "*In short, "getting it together" requires slowing the mind. Quietening the mind means less thinking, calculating, judging, worrying, fearing, hoping, trying, regretting, controlling, jittering or distracting.*"

In other words, we need to learn how to turn off our analytical minds.

“To be happy with yourself in the present moment while maintaining a dream of your future is a grand recipe for manifestation.”

~ Dr. Joe Dispenza

P.S. This is part of a longer chat but reminds me of [Stephen King’s *On Writing*](#) (see Notes). He said that when he was teaching early in his career, his brain was so hopped up it felt like he had spent a week with “jumper cables” on them—making it *really* hard to write. We need to deliberately, consistently unplug from constant stimulation and spend more time in mellow alpha throughout the day if we want to drop into theta more easily and often!

OUR LIVES ARE OUR INITIATION INTO GREATNESS

“There are no schools of ancient spiritual wisdom sitting high on mountaintops in the Himalayas waiting to initiate us into becoming mystics and saints. Our *lives* are our initiation into greatness. Maybe you and I should see life as an opportunity to reach greater and greater levels of self so that we can overcome our own limitations with more expanded levels of consciousness. That’s how a pragmatist, instead of a victim, sees it.

To abandon the familiar ways in which we’ve grown accustomed to thinking about life in order to embrace new paradigms will feel unnatural in the beginning. Frankly, it takes effort—and it’s uncomfortable. Why? Because when we change, we no longer feel like ourselves. My definition of genius, then, is to be uncomfortable and to be okay with being uncomfortable.”

News flash: “*There are no schools of ancient wisdom sitting high on mountaintops in the Himalayas waiting to initiate us into becoming mystics and saints. Our *lives* are our initiation into greatness.*”

And that’s exciting news, indeed! Every moment (literally!!!) gives us a chance to assume the role of epigenetic engineer as we choose new thoughts, behaviors and feelings and, in the process, change our destiny.

Let’s do this! :)

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

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you’ll probably like...

**Breaking the Habit of
Being Yourself**

[Mind Gym](#)

The Genie in Your Genes

About the Author of “You Are the Placebo”

DR. JOE DISPENZA



Joe Dispenza, D.C., author of *You Are the Placebo*, *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* and *Evolve Your Brain*, has a passion for teaching others how to use the latest discoveries from neuroscience and quantum physics to reprogram their brains, heal illness, and lead more fulfilled lives. One of the experts featured in the film *What the BLEEP Do We Know!?*, Dr. Joe teaches workshops and lectures all over the world. He’s also designed a corporate program that brings his model of transformation to businesses. Get book [here](#). Connect with Joe [here](#).

About the Author of This Note

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at [brianjohnson.me](#).