

*The Enlightened Brain Online Course* explores the intersection of three circles: psychology, brain science, and contemplative practice. In terms of contemplative practices, we'll mostly be drawing from Buddhism, which has had the most intersection with Western science. Buddhism also has a great interest in facts—in particular the facts of the causes and conditions that lead to both suffering and its end.

What I've done in this course is to ground this suffering and its end in human brain development. I've done this in terms of evolutionary psychology, or how the brain has evolved over time to be capable of unnecessarily heightened states of stress of conflict, of paralyzing sadness, and a general nastiness toward ourselves and others—as well as great happiness, contentment, love, and wisdom.

In this course we'll be exploring both the bad news and the good news. The bad news is that the nervous system, headquartered in the brain, generates nearly constant background signals of alarm that keep us continually looking around our environment for potential dangers. A bias toward negativity has also developed in the human brain, making it deeply absorb and retain negative experiences but allowing positive ones to slip away.

But there is also good news: Our brains have a capacity to rest in a natural state of calm contentment and caring. It is by learning how to trigger and refine and concentrate and deepen this natural ability that will bring us to the realizations that reside in the upper reaches of our human potential.

This program is an operating manual for your brain. It includes a toolbox of techniques that are grounded in science and informed by contemplative practice to gradually change your brain for the better, helping you to move progressively and consciously, step by step, on your own path toward your version of an enlightened brain.