The Emotional Life of Your Brain

How Its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live – and How you Can Change Them

By Richard J. Davidson, Ph.D. & Sharon Begley, Bestselling author of Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain

A leading pioneer in brain science, Richard Davidson in his 30 years of research has produced hundreds of findings, from how the brain triggers empathy to the differences between the autistic brain and the normally developing brain to how the brain’s seat of rationality can plunge us into depths of depression. Davidson’s groundbreaking work has helped all of us to understand what it means to be human.

Now, in one of the most anticipated brain books in decades, Davidson along with former Newsweek science writer Sharon Begley introduce a new model of our emotions— their origins, their power, and their malleability in The Emotional Life of Your Brain [ Hudson Street Press; March 2012; ISBN: 978-1-59463-089-7]. He has discovered that personality is composed of six basic emotional dimensions or styles – our emotional fingerprint results from where on the continuum of each style we fall. Even more interesting, he’s discovered the brain chemistry that underlies each style, one that will even go so far as to affect the way we treat conditions like autism and depression.

The icing on the cake is that he provides us with strategies to change our own brains and our own emotional styles, to help with a wide range of problems from having a negative outlook to being terminally scatterbrained.

Emotional Style is compromised of six dimensions. Neither conventional aspects of personality nor simple emotional traits or moods, these six dimensions reflect the discoveries of modern neuroscientific research: They are:
Resilience: how slowly or quickly you recover from adversity

Outlook: how long you are able to sustain positive emotion.

Social Intuition: how adept you are at picking up social signals from the people around you.

Self Awareness: How well you perceive bodily feelings that reflect emotions.

Sensitivity to Context: how good are you at regulating your emotional responses to take into account the social context you find yourself in.

Attention: how sharp and clear your focus is.

The information in this book works through the mind to change the brain. It has the power to help you be the person you want to be and live the life you aspire to.

RICHARD DAVIDSON, PH.D is the William James and Vilas Research Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry and director of the Waisman Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior and the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience and Founder and Chair of the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds, at the Waisman Center, all at the University of Wisconsin- Madison

SHARON BEGLEY has been the science editor and science columnist at Newsweek as well as science columnist at The Wall Street Journal.

Advance Praise for The Emotional Life of Your Brain

“The best book I know on how to use the exciting discoveries of neuroscience to change your life. A fabulous read – a scientific adventure story like Sherlock Holmes meeting Watson and Crick with the Dalai Lama as their advisor.”  -- Jack Kornfield, author of The Wise Heart

“Richard Davidson and Sharon Begley have created a pioneering look at the brain chemistry of our emotions. By looking at Davidson’s scientific proof that meditation and other cognitive practices actually change the brain, the authors enable all of us to genuinely modify our most difficult emotional habits and create new and more fruitful ones. Look forward to cultivating keener attention, having more attunement to others, and being more connected to your own intuition. It’s all possible—and this book shows you how.”

-- Deepak Chopra, author of How to Know God