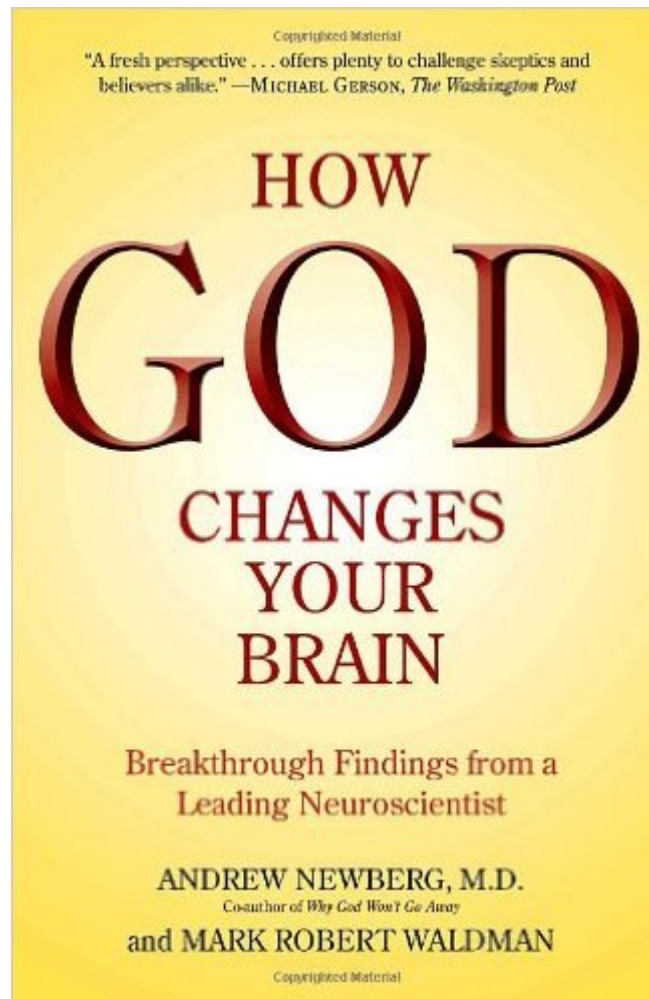


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# How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings From A Leading Neuroscientist



## Synopsis

God is greatâ™ for your mental, physical, and spiritual health. Based on new evidence culled from brain-scan studies, a wide-reaching survey of peopleâ™s religious and spiritual experiences, and the authorsâ™ analyses of adult drawings of God, neuroscientist Andrew Newberg and therapist Mark Robert Waldman offer the following breakthrough discoveries:â€¢ Not only do prayer and spiritual practice reduce stress, but just twelve minutes of meditation per day may slow down the aging process.â€¢ Contemplating a loving God rather than a punitive God reduces anxiety and depression and increases feelings of security, compassion, and love.â€¢ Fundamentalism, in and of itself, can be personally beneficial, but the prejudice generated by extreme beliefs can permanently damage your brain.â€¢ Intense prayer and meditation permanently change numerous structures and functions in the brain, altering your values and the way you perceive reality. Both a revelatory work of modern science and a practical guide for readers to enhance their physical and emotional health, How God Changes Your Brain is a first-of-a-kind book about faith that is as credible as it is inspiring.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Details about this book appeared in Time magazine a few weeks ago, featuring Newberg's and Waldman's research on spirituality and the brain. They touted it as a "self-help field guide to the health benefits of spirituality" and meditation practice. Then it was featured in Oprah magazine, so as a mental health professional, I had to see what their research was all about. What I found was a brainstorm of some of the most amazing research on how spiritual practices change the structure

and function of our brain. Like the classic book, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James, the authors, who are neuroscientists at the University of Pennsylvania, summarize a dozen different ways the human brain processes spiritual experiences. For example, one part of the brain can generate images of an angry god; another, feelings of a compassionate god; yet another part of the brain can generate doubtful thoughts, and so on. They also present new data showing how Americans are becoming less religious but more spiritual as they embrace images of a universe that is scientific yet mystical. Their online survey of a thousand participants shows that nearly everyone holds radically different concepts of "God." They even track, using people who draw pictures of God, how this concept begins as a face in a child's brain, and that the more a child thinks about god, new abstract conceptualizations begin to form in different parts of the brain.

I'm a professor of business at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and I have to say that I was blown away by this book, for the simple reason that I have a deep love for science, and a deep appreciation of meditation and spiritual practices. Like the previous reviews, I was surprised to see a neuroscience book be simultaneously recommended by Time Magazine and Oprah. I have followed Newberg and Waldman's research for years, and have actually used some of the focusing exercises they describe in their book to help my students do better in class. I think this is their best book yet, because anyone can use their simple exercises to help stay focused on their commitments, goals, and personal values. I plan to try out their new exercises, like Compassionate Communication, to see if I can improve social empathy with my fiancé as well as my students. I believe that they have solid documented research to show that the exercises in the book actually improve the sales potential of business people (this is based on a Stanford University study that taught a forgiveness meditation to executives at American Express). I recently found out that Waldman is conducting research at Moorpark College showing that sitting quietly or yawning for a few minutes before taking a class can improve student test scores by an entire grade point. This book goes beyond the normal self-help books because it is solidly grounded in Newberg's brain scan research showing how the simple exercises they offer in the book change the structure and function of the brain. Here are some of the points that particularly interested me: 1. Different parts of the brain construct different perceptions and experiences of the world, including one's concept of God. 2.

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