



Letter Three: Retrain The Reptile Brain

Hi Again,

Hope you are doing better today.

It's been kinda rough for me this morning as I woke up not feeling that great and my body temperature was super hot... doesn't help that I spent half the morning outside in the humid hot air sucking on cigars I'm sure.

I think I got heat exhaustion or something... it was like 80 with 70 percent humidity... and I was out there for over 3 hours straight.

That's one of the things I had to learn to deal with in my sobriety... some days you just don't feel good... and that is ok... we learn from it and move on... as I learned when I was in rehab... some days you just feel like shit.

My old "reptile brain" go to strategy for not feeling well used to be do drink, I would drink when I had a headache, a cold, flu, or was just tired.

So lets start off today by going over the "ass fall off pact" again.

Today you are not going to drink even if your ass falls off... remember tomorrow you can go out and get all fucked up (if you still want to) but today we are going to stay sober... and if you read these letters first thing in the morning... several times a day if needed... things will start to change for you...

With that said... today's letter is all about retraining your reptile brain.

What is a reptile brain you ask... it's the primitive part of your brain, the autopilot part that controls your impulse, obsessions, day to day rituals, and the fight or flight response.

When something scares you... it's the thing that makes you jump.

Needless to say – this part of our brain does not use "words" to speak to us but rather just sends chemically driven emotion waves thru our body and mind.



This is the part of my brain that ordered drinks for me at lunch when I wasn't paying attention... it will nag the hell out of you to get what it wants.

And it WANTS to drink. You have trained it to want to drink over and over again... that's how your reptile brain works.

Sometimes you won't even see it coming... and its always the one you don't see coming that gets you... so be on guard... just knowing its there isn't going to help you... you need to recognize it and take a minute to evaluate what is going on... sometimes its just a weird feeling... other times its warning you of something.

The reptile brain learns by experience... touch the hot stove... and BAM a memory is burned in your subconscious... OUCH don't touch hot stoves... sometimes you can even feel the burn in your mind by just thinking about it.

The crazy thing about this one is that it doesn't use words... so its not like you think... oh gee a stove... better not touch that. No its just boom, instant feeling in the body... you can even see someone's demeanor change before they even notice what is going on.

The mind is funny like that... you could be driving along having the perfect day and all the sudden – severe sadness... out of nowhere for no reason... your just down in the dumps.

But what you didn't see was the three things you passed by on your drive that reminded you unconsciously of someone you miss... could be someone walking a puppy, a billboard, or three notes from a song that reminds you of them.

You weren't even thinking about it... you didn't even consciously see the triggers or hear the song... and like that... your mind just triggers SAD.

Same thing with alcohol... only instead of one song, or someone walking a puppy... you have linked this alcohol = good feeling thing to damn near everything in your house outside your house and pretty much everywhere you



go... hell at this point its probably linked to your anxiety which shows up worse when you are trying to not drink... sucks doesn't it.

So... You Feel like crap one day... your reptile brain knows the remedy... drink it away.

And the more you reinforce something in your reptile brain – the harder it gets to change. If you keep touching the hot stove over and over... pretty soon the reptile brain will make you stove a phobic or something like that.

That's how these things develop.

When we moved to florida this summer we quickly learned that it is illegal to feed the alligators.

The reason is simple... once an alligator AKA giant lizard brain is fed by a human... its mind now equates humans with food... and the feelings of hunger are now associated to humans as a way to feel full.

Because the alligator does not think in language, he cannot sit back and think about his actions before he performs them... because he is on autopilot. So he just acts based on feelings without thought.

Like a baby who cannot yet articulate his feelings, wants, and desires... he just feels hungry or tired or needy... and cries and cries and cries till he gets what he wants.

Your lizard brain is going to cry and cry and cry till you give it what it wants.

Only on top of this reptile brain thing... you also have chemical dependency... which means your body now thinks it needs alcohol to survive.

When I was drinking I got to the point where I was pretty much living on a few bites of food each day and several gallons of alcoholic beverages... beer and wine in the mornings and afternoons and hard stuff at night...



Unless all we had was hard stuff or I needed to really escape... then I would just skip the beer and wine and go straight for the real deal.

Then... after I woke up... at whatever time it was... sometimes 2PM sometimes 4AM sometimes 12AM it was unpredictable really... and because of all the drinking and my lousy sleep schedule...

I always felt like shit...

And my reptile brain knows how to fix this... got it handled... just grab another drink or twenty... which led to more odd sleep times, which led to more feeling like crap, which led to more drinking...

I was in the death grip of an Alcoholic Hysteria.

Knowing I had to quit was not enough, thinking I was going to die was not enough... at this point I welcomed that idea... after all a piece of shit like me should die and give my family the life insurance and the blessing of not having me around.

But... was it really me who had BECOME this terrible thing I couldn't stand to look at in the mirror... or was I on autopilot?

Was it the reptile taking over my thoughts, feelings, emotions, and causing me to repeat this insane behavior over and over and over again?

Sure... there are some parts of me that are probably quite assholeic... but is this who I AM?

Remember that example I talked about yesterday... about those people who went thru crazy things and had their personalities almost completely wiped out so much that people couldn't recognize them.

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” Victor Frankl



That quote was written by a holocaust survivor... and I have to think that he knows a thing or two about how to survive a bad situation...

You see what is happening here is we are not allowing time between the lizard brain and the thinking (conscious) mind... we are acting on impulse... reacting rather than responding... We must now learn to interrupt the process.

That is what is going on with you... what went on with me.

Your reptile brain has put you in a tailspin and your body has followed by feeling like it now needs alcohol to survive.

Now... before we go any further... you should know that alcohol addiction is DANGEROUS and detoxing cold turkey or even at all can be fatal.

I would highly advise that you seek medical attention and look for warning signs, get on the phone with a doctor, be up front with your amounts, and get some help with that... this book will not replace doctor advice and supervised detox... GET IT NOW and don't fuck around with this stuff.

With that said... you probably know by now that you are in an alcoholic hysteria tailspin and it is starting to make more sense why big bad you cannot beat this tiny little bottle.

If I strapped you to a merry go round for 12 hours straight and spun it as fast as I could... you wouldn't call yourself a weakling for feeling dizzy would you?

So here you are... and you are on this merry go round... and when its going it feels kinda fun... when it stops you feel like crap... so you keep going and going and going.

And now it's too late and you cannot get off anymore.

Because your reptile brain is gonna tell you... keep going... keep going... this will fix it.



And sometimes you will be sitting there... happy... having been off the ride for a few hours or a day... and that reptile for no apparent reason causes an urge and you have almost no choice but to hop back on the ride.

This is what you are dealing with here.

Its not some guy at a bar who just likes to drink... if you are resonating with these letters... you are probably a full blown alcoholic.

Only till now you haven't really been able to see how this works... not because you are not smart... no way... my iq was like 158 last I checked (I took the test online so its probably really like 14) but needless to say I wasn't some dumbass off the street who didn't research this stuff... I looked into it deep and tried to figure out "what was wrong with me."

Here are a few things I figured out:

1. Nothing is really "WRONG" with me... I am just a human making my way thru life... all the things that I do are conditioned responses that were formed by the situations I found myself in... can't get mad when i get dizzy on the merry go round...
2. You can stop the world with one breath... allow your self to stop when you get frustrated anxious, or feel angry. Now I know that these things are just feelings and feelings wont kill me... drinking might... but these feelings will just be ok. Give yourself a 15 minute break... just about everything can wait 15 minutes.
3. Racing thoughts and emotions are not to be taken seriously... and DO NOT need to be drowned in alcohol... that just makes them worse in the long run... this is what got you into this mess and im gonna teach you how to get out of it.



So today we learned how the reptile works and what it desires... remember... we do not have to feed it... feeding it only makes it stronger and makes it crave more.

You are going to learn a new way of life... and right now it seems far out of reach and some of the stuff might seem kinda crazy... but we are going to get thru this together.

Remember... don't drink even if your ass falls off – muscle thru the nasty feelings without alcohol... your reptile wants you to think that its worse than it is so that you cave and feed her... but remember...

DON'T FEED THE FUCKING ALLIGATORS!

Pause the world with a 15 minute break and start living your live not by reacting but rather by responding.

Talk tomorrow... were gonna go over “false confidence” based on feelings.

Marcus

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