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Barriers, not labels.

Vital for some. Beneficial for all.

We care, not we care if...

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What matters most to you for your child?

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Children don't arrive at learning in the same state every day.

Neither do we

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Why?

Why can we know the right thing to do… and still react differently?

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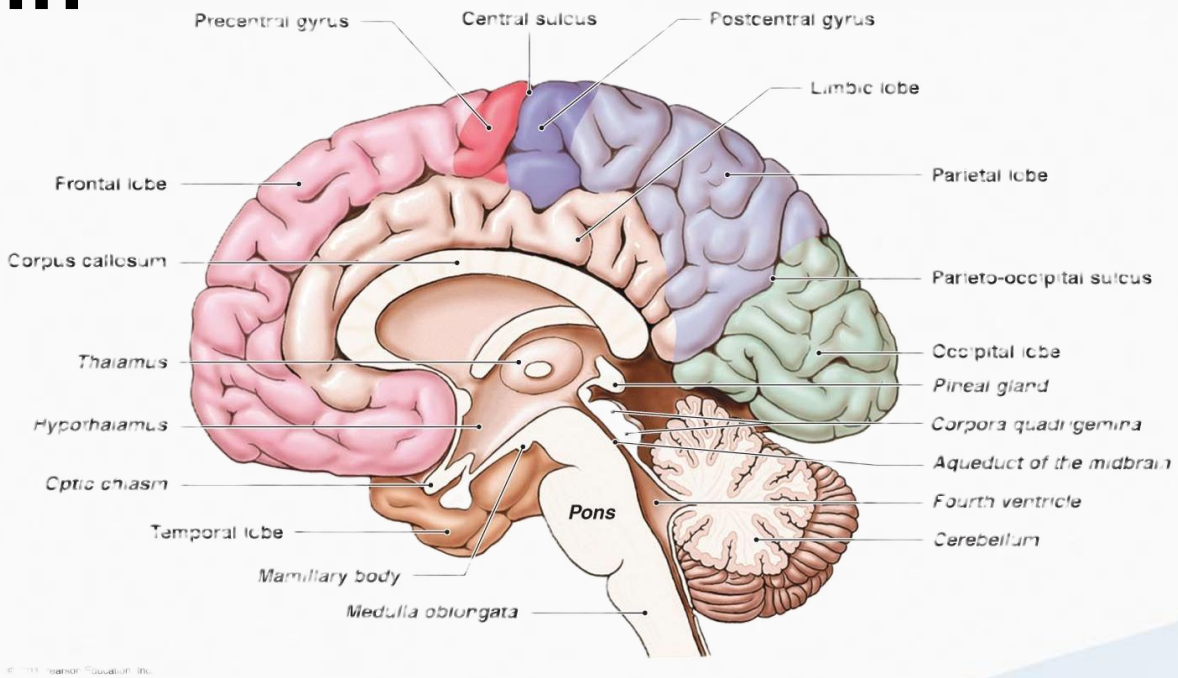
The Brain



The Chimp

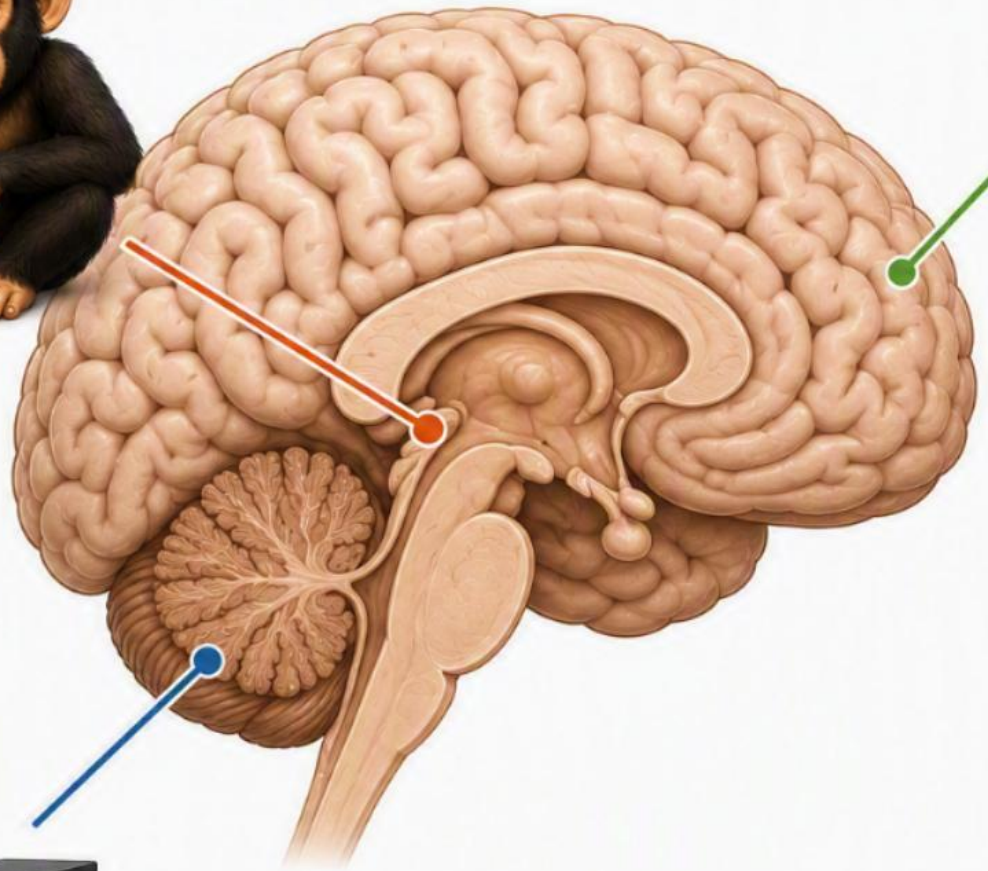
Fast, emotional
and protective.
It reacts instinctively
to danger.

Located in:
The amygdala and
limbic system
(the emotional centre)

The Human

Thinks, reasons
and plans.
It helps us make sense
of things and make
better choices.

Located in:
The prefrontal cortex
(the thinking centre)



The Computer

Stores information,
memories, habits
and beliefs.
It works automatically,
using past experience.

Located in:
The hippocampus,
cerebellum and
brain pathways
(the memory and
habit centre)

The Chimp Paradox

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Go back thousands of years...

Imagine survival depends on noticing danger quickly.

DANGER

ACT NOW

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Your Chimp has one very important job.

KEEP YOU SAFE.

Notice danger → react quickly → protect

The Chimp isn't bad. We need it.

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Fast can be useful.

When something genuinely feels dangerous, rapid protective responses make sense.

FIGHT

FLIGHT

FREEZE

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What ‘dangers’ were there 100,000 years ago?

Other people

Excluded from the tribe

Illness

Injury

Animals

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What ‘dangers’ do children face in school?

“Everyone is looking at me.”

“I don't know what to do.”

“I've got it wrong.”

“That's not fair.”

“My friend doesn't want me.”

“The plan has changed.”

“This is too hard.”

“I'm going to fail.”

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How does the chimp react/behave?

FEELS THREATENED → PROTECT

Behaviour is the visible part. It doesn't tell us the whole story.

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But the Chimp isn't the whole model.

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Meet the Human.

Pause • think • reason • plan • consider • choose

What sort of people do you want to be?

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Chimp and Human can want different things.

CHIMP

“Get me out of this.”
“This is unfair.”
“Do something NOW.”

HUMAN

“Pause.”
“Let's work this out.”
“What could I do next?”

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The Computer

- Stores experiences and memories
- Stores beliefs and expectations
- Stores learned behaviours and habits
- Creates automatic responses
- Works without us consciously thinking
- **Can react faster than the Chimp or Human**
- Can contain helpful **and** unhelpful programmes
- **Can be reprogrammed through new experiences and practice**

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What's stored in the Computer?

EXPERIENCES	What has happened to me before?
BELIEFS	What have I learned about myself, other people and the world?
EXPECTATIONS	What do I think is going to happen?
LEARNED RESPONSES	What have I learned to do when this happens?
HABITS	What have I practised so often that it becomes automatic?

The Computer is constantly being programmed by experience and practice.

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Not everything stored is helpful.

HELPFUL

“I can ask for help.”

“Mistakes are part of learning.”

“Adults will help me.”

“I can recover.”

“I know what to do when I'm frustrated.”

UNHELPFUL

“I'm rubbish at this.”

“Getting it wrong is embarrassing.”

“Adults always tell me off.”

“Once it's gone wrong, it's ruined.”

“When I'm angry, I shout.”

But what's stored isn't fixed.

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“Can I have a word?”

What's just happened in your head?

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Same words. Different Computers & Chimps

“Can I have a word?”

“What have I done?”

“I'm in trouble.”

“I wonder what they want?”

“This won't be good.”

“Maybe they need my help.”

“Great — perhaps it's about that idea.”

Nothing has happened yet — but something stored may already be influencing the response.

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Now imagine you're 8.

“We're doing some independent writing.”

“I always get this wrong.”

“Everyone else finishes before me.”

“People notice when I get it wrong.”

“I need to get out of this.”

“I can do this.”

“I can ask for help.”

“Mistakes are okay.”

“My teacher will help me.”

Same instruction. Different stored learning.

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The Computer can be reprogrammed.

Not simply by telling a child to think differently.

NEW EXPERIENCES + REPEATED PRACTICE

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Reprogramming takes experience.

OLD PROGRAMME

Difficult work

↓

“I can't do this.”

↓

Avoid / refuse

↓

Another difficult experience

NEW EXPERIENCES

Difficult work

↓

Adult notices and supports

↓

Practise asking for help

↓

Experiences success

↓

REPEAT

Over time: “I can ask for help.” • “Adults will help me.” • “I can get through this.”

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If we want it stored, children need opportunities to practise it.

- Ask for help
- Cope with mistakes
- Notice how they feel
- Use a regulation strategy
- Manage frustration
- Return after something goes wrong
- Repair
- Try again

We can’t just expect these behaviours.
We need to teach and practise them.

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The Chimp Model

CHIMP

Fast • emotional • protective

How I feel and react

HUMAN

Deliberate • reflective • reasoning

How I think and choose

COMPUTER

Stored • learned • automatic

What I've learned from experience

All three can influence what happens next.