

FLIPPING YOUR LID

EXPLAINING THE BRAIN TO OLDER KIDS AND TEENS



The background image is a composite. It features a close-up of a man's face, specifically his eye and nose area, which is rendered in a dark, textured, charcoal-like style. Overlaid on this is a complex mechanical watch movement, showing various gears, jewels, and a central dial with a hand. The watch movement is rendered in a warm, orange-brown color. The overall composition suggests a connection between human thought and mechanical precision.

BRAIN WORKS

This is a story about our brains, how we think and what happens when we "flip our lid".

Flipping your lid, means you have lost control. When a person flips their lid, it means they are no longer thinking and acting clearly.

Cue the palm of your hand... (and NO I am NOT referring to a spanking):

Our Hand And Our Brain

Our hand is a good representation of our the brain. The palm of the hand to the wrist represents the part of the brain called the "downstairs brain". The downstairs brain controls the body's automatic functions. These are the bodily functions we don't have to think about, they happen automatically. Heart beat and breathing are two examples of functions the downstairs brain controls.



Our Hand And Our Brain

The thumb crossing over the palm represents the "mid brain" - your amygdala. This is the part of the body that controls our "fight, flight, freeze" response. Fight, flight, freeze are survival tactics we use in the face of perceived danger or threats. When faced with a threat we can either stay and fight, freeze or..run away!

This part of the brain also stores our old memories. Sometimes those memories make us feel scared or sad because of what happened in our past, even if what is happening right now is not the same.



Our Hand And Our Brain

The fingers covering the thumb represents the cortex - your "upstairs brain". The front where your fingernails are, is the only place in the brain where thinking, problem solving and self-control happens. This is the part of the brain that allows you to *think before you act*.

Therefore, when your fingers are covering your thumb, you are able to problem solve, think clearly, use your empathy, listen effectively, etc. Our big, powerful emotions are contained.

However, when we get upset, our amygdala flips our lid! Our cortex is no longer in a position to contain our powerful emotions. And what gets exposed? Our fight, flight, freeze response. And our old memories...

We start to act without thinking .





FIGHT



FREEZE



FLIGHT



MEMORIES



Brain & amygdala hand model explains how thoughts & emotions fuel ...



Watch later



Share

**FLIP
YOUR
LED**



WHO IS LISTENING?

Now imagine two people who have flipped their lids... Are they listening to each other?



Is this the time to solve the problem they are having?



Will these two people work together or help the situation right now?



Image

THE WAITING GAME

We need to wait and calm down so we can think clearly again.

This hand represents a "brain" with its lid almost flipped.

If my Dad/Mom/Teacher sees me acting like I'm about to flip my lid, they can show me this sign. Or if I feel I'm about to flip my lid I can show my Dad/Mom/Teacher the sign as well!



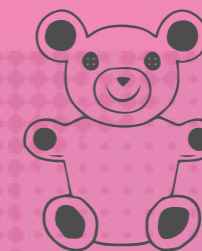
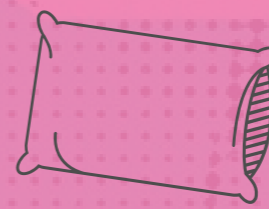
It is a reminder to me that it might help to go to a special place to cool down. Once I have taken some time and calmed down in my special place, then I can come back and talk about what happened and work on solving the problem.

| H

WAIT! WHAT SPECIAL PLACE?!

That is part of the problem - we haven't made a special place for these "flip your lid" moments, yet. It can be in your room, in a classroom, in the garden - a place where you are able to relax when you feel frustrated or feel as if you are about to flip your lid. You can use this space whenever you feel like you need a break. You might also use this space when you get angry, so you don't do or say things that you will later regret.

Some people like to have certain things in their space to help them feel better, like books, music, pillows, or stuffed animals.



You can take slow, deep breaths to relax (like you are smelling a mug of hot chocolate inhaling and blowing it cool when you exhale).

GROWING YOUR CALM

What would be the things you would like / need in your special place?

1 |

2 |

3 |

4 |

5 |

You might also want to ask your Dad/Mom/Teacher to go with you to your special place for comfort. They will be able to give you hugs and/or reassurance that they still love you.

In your special place you can take some time and "grow your calm" until you are ready to talk about what happened and work on solving the problem.

