

# How to Hack Our Brain for Success

by John Rampton



What's the secret to success? Some would argue that insanely successful people possess traits like having a vision, showing gratitude, being honest, learning from failure and having a high emotional intelligence.

While these traits definitely play a role, the real secret to success comes down to science, particularly advancements in neuroscience, and how you can condition your brain to achieve your dreams and goals.



Four-time Olympian Ruben Gonzalez is one of the country's leading keynote speakers.

The neuroscience of success can get complicated, but it's really about how your brain functions in three different areas: reticular activating system (RAS), the release of dopamine and your memory. If you're not a science person, I'll try and make this all as painless as possible.

## The Reticular Activating System

Located at the base of the brain where it connects with the spinal cord, there's one of most important parts of the brain: the reticular activating system.

RAS influences cognition and is basically a filter for the roughly eight million bits of information (subconsciously) flowing through our brain. In other words, it eliminates the white noise. When a message gets past the RAS filter it enters the cerebrum and is then converted into conscious thoughts, emotions or even both.

As **Ruben Gonzalez**, author of *The Courage to Succeed*, explains, "Even though the cerebrum is the center of thought, it will not respond to a message unless the RAS allows it. The RAS is like Google. There are millions of websites out there, but you filter out the ones you are not interested in simply by typing a keyword."

So, what messages get through? Pretty much just the ones that are currently important to you. For example, if you're focused on preparing for a speaking engagement then your RAS is going to filter in the thoughts that are going to make your presentation a success, such as the tools and resources you'll need to deliver a memorable speech.

As **Gonzalez** adds, "This means the more you keep your goals 'top of mind,' the more your subconscious mind will work to reach them. That's why writing your goals down every day, visualizing your intended outcome and regularly saying affirmations is so important! Doing those things truly does help you to focus your subconscious mind on what's important to you."

### **Tips to Rewire Your Brain for Success**

- Exercise and meditation. Exercising releases endorphins, which can help with problem solving and boost creativity. Meditation can help you achieve inner calm and break down any mental barriers or limitations.
- Consume a diet rich in omega-3s and healthy fats. These can help keep dopamine levels in your brain active, as well as increase cerebral circulation.
- Precision affirmations. John Assaraf, the CEO of NeuroGym says, "Make clear, definitive statement about yourself as if it is already true, your subconscious mind takes over and will act in accordance with that belief." This "will imprint these beliefs into new neural pathways."
- Say your "Chief Aim" every morning and evening. Based on Napoleon Hill's Think and Grow Rich, "A definite chief aim is a specific, clearly-defined statement of purpose," writes Dr. Julie Connor. "It has the power to guide your subconscious mind. It transforms your attitude from pessimism into positive expectation."
- Get plenty of sleep. Make sure that you get between 6 1/2 and 8 hours of quality sleep every night so that you're more attentive and focused.
- 15 minutes a day. Carve out 15 minutes of your day to learn something new or master a skill you already have. It will have a positive impact on your brain.
- Remove yourself from negative and stressful environments. According to Robert Sapolsky, a neuroendocrinology professor at Stanford University, "stress can not only be stopped, but reversed once the source, psychological or physical, is removed or sufficiently reduced." In other words, the physical environment around us plays a very important role in the health of our brains.
- Visualization. "Visualization is a powerful tool to retrain your subconscious mind, because it allows you to feel and experience a situation which hasn't happened yet -- as if it were real," writes Assaraf. In short, "if you are able to genuinely 'see' yourself as financially successful in your mind, your subconscious will process that as reality."