

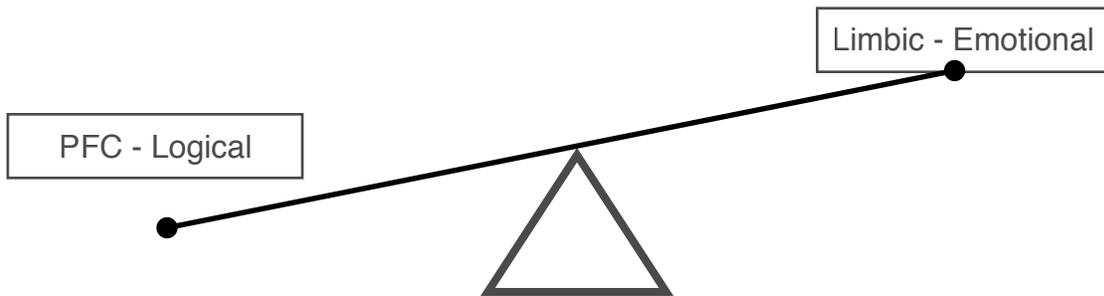
Limbic - Pre-Frontal Cortex Seesaw

Limbic system: The home of your emotions.
Reaction and Impulse.

Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC): The home of rational thinking and logic.
Reason, analysis, impulse control, decisions.

When you feel fear, anxiety, overwhelm, shame, anger, etc. your limbic system lights up and consequently the energy in your PFC goes down.

If you view it like a seesaw you can see that when the limbic system is heating up with emotional energy, your PFC has the opportunity to kick off the ground and bring the energy back to the PFC in order to quiet the limbic system.



So how do you do this?

You could suppress it or deny it but then it isn't processed and it will just resurface later. You could even express it, but that's not always helpful either.

There are two primary ways:

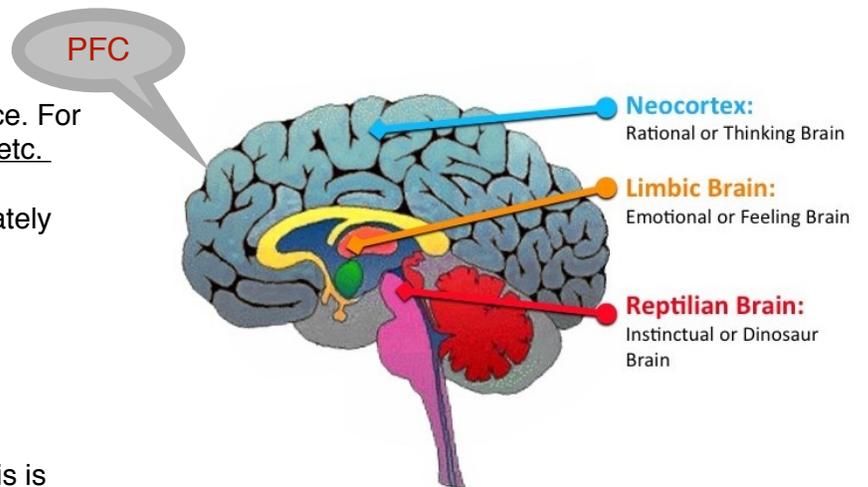
1- **LABEL** your emotional experience. For example, I am feeling fear, anxiety, etc. The optimal way to approach these emotions are leveling them immediately upon their arrival.

“Name it to tame it”

says Dan Siegel.

This reduces limbic arousal.

Do NOT say: I'm feeling fear and this is probably because blah, blah, blah. Don't dig into it. Make it simple with one or two words only!



2 - **REAPPRAISE**. The gap between stimulus and response is your exceptionally valuable reappraisal period. This is the place that you get to CHOOSE how you're going to respond.

Usually people immediately think that when something goes "wrong" that it is due to something negative. This immediate response then triggers more fear (et. al) and turns on the fight or flight response.

If the initial appraisal is "Oh shoot, not again! I just can't handle this" for example...the reappraisal might be. "Ah! Okay, I see what's going on. I'm capable. I've got this", or "this experience is here so that I can learn from it." ... or some similar reappraisal.

Let your PFC "director" do it's job and evaluate the data that is coming into your consciousness.

This reduces the activity of the limbic system and supports logical, rational thinking. It is a great way to engage the PFC in order to reduce your heightened, emotionally aroused response.

