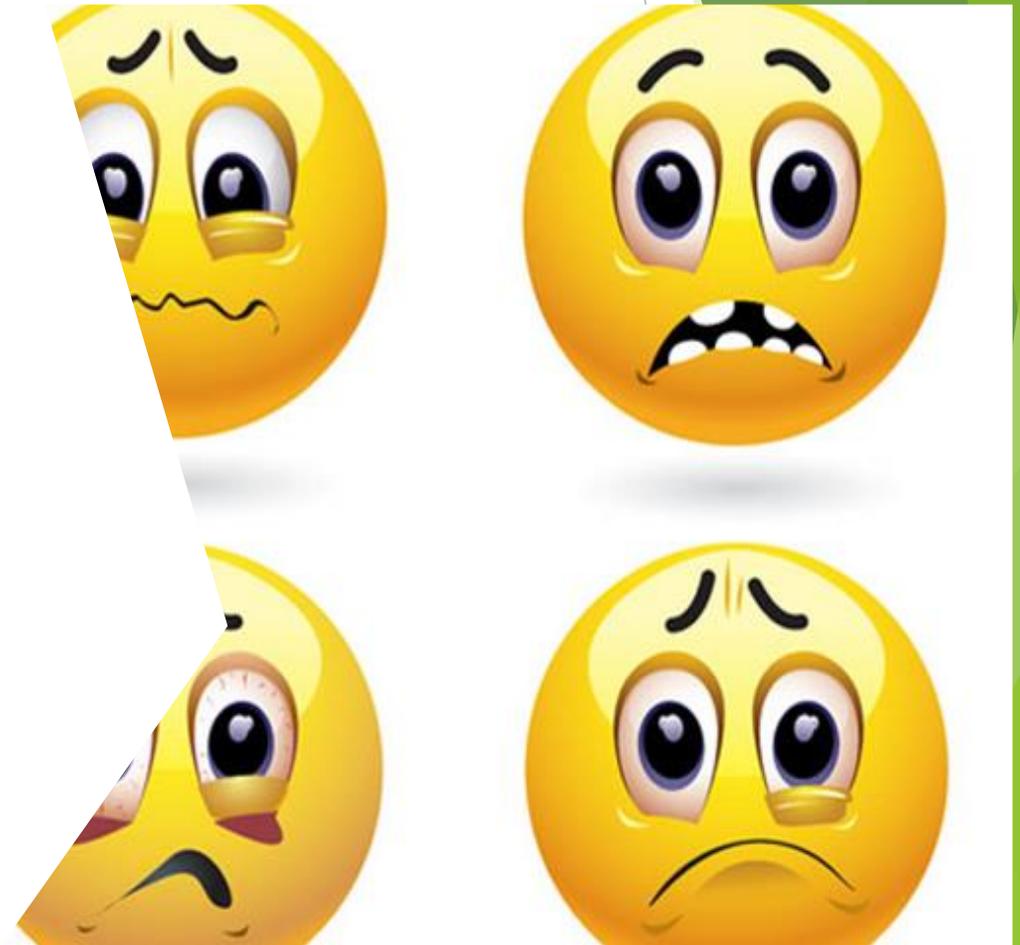


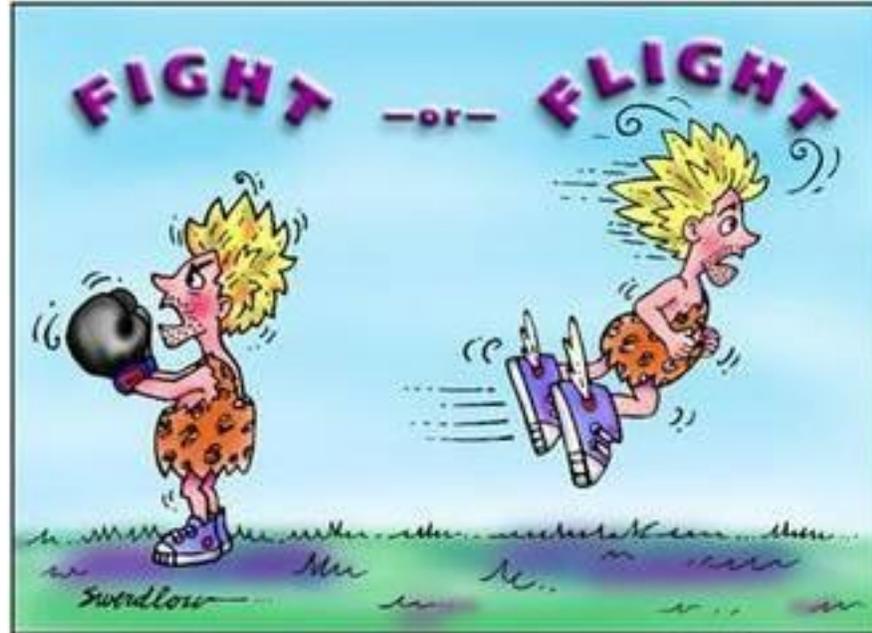
# The Corona Virus

The Evil Twins:

**FEAR and ANXIETY**

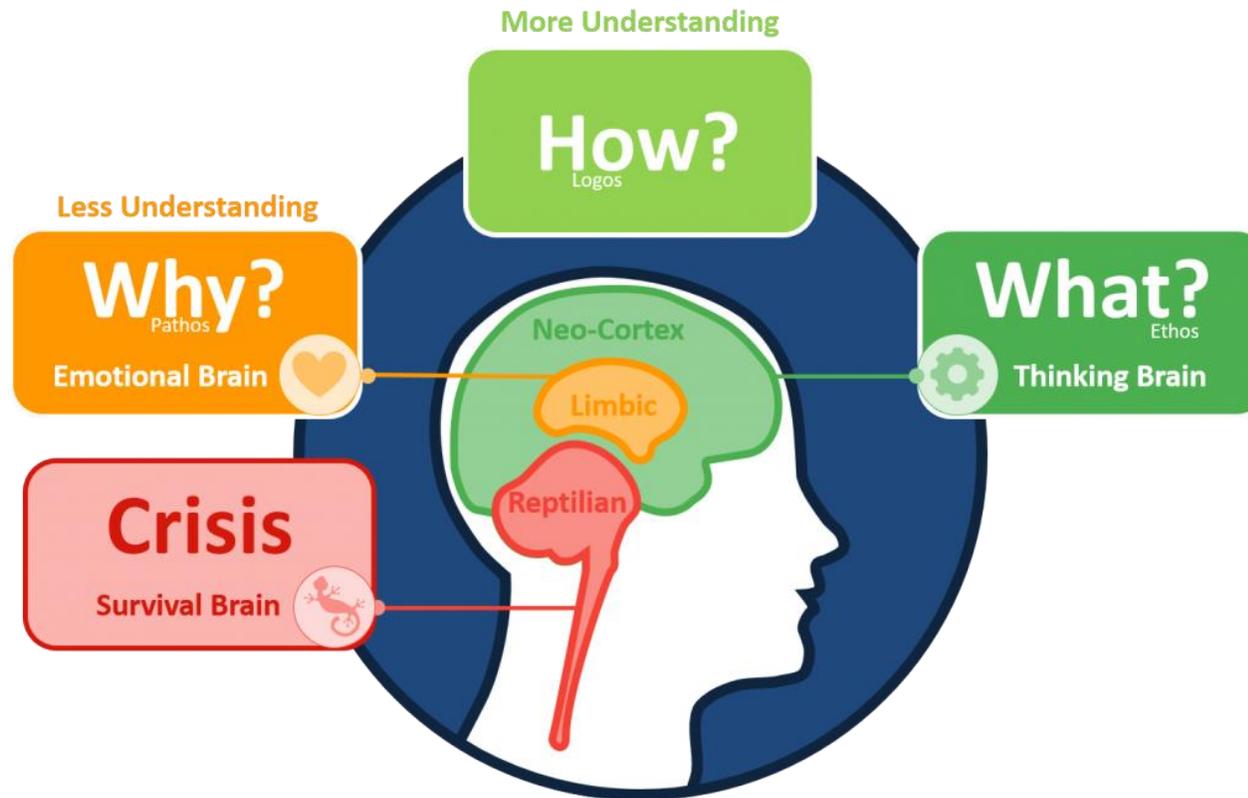


We are sort of wired for it  
Remember this ??

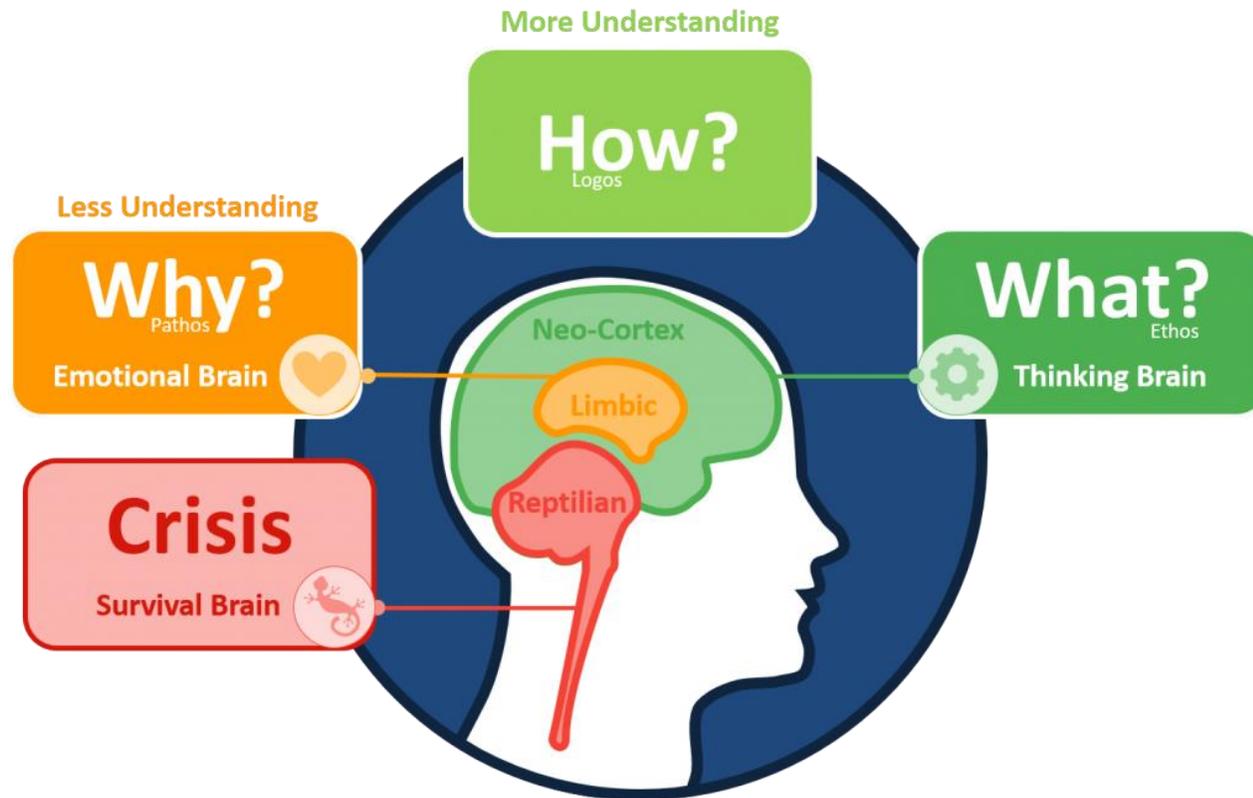


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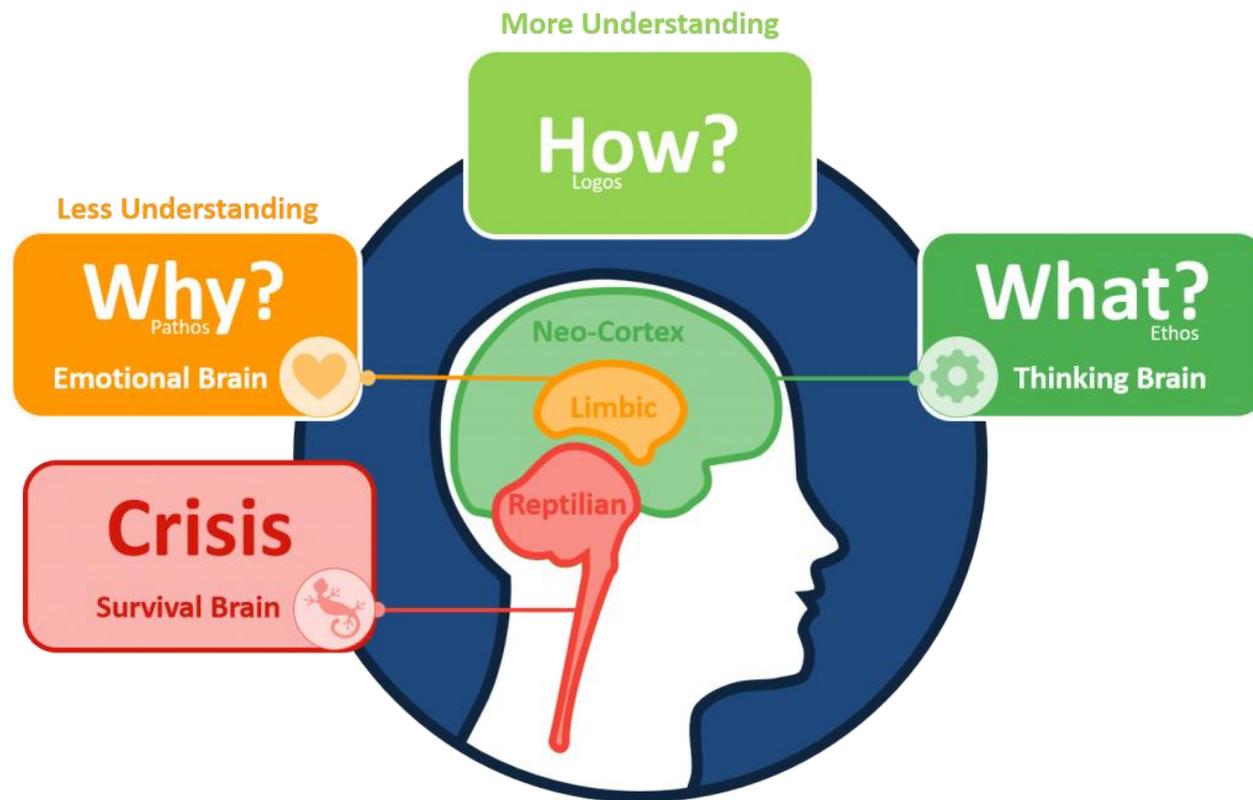
At that time, we were responding with our Primitive  
(or Reptilian Brain) = RUN



As we evolved, we were able to associate feelings to this very clear danger - usually great anxiety and then we ran



As our Neocortex developed, we were able to think;  
The thought said - That is dangerous- I had better  
run now



# TODAY

- ▶ We find ourselves dealing with both:
  - ▶ our fears and anxieties,
  - ▶ our thoughts and our feelings -
- ▶ So it is very important to examine each to see:
  - ▶ how they are different
  - ▶ how to work with each

# FEAR



- ▶ The most highly developed part of our brain It is A THOUGHT PROCESS
- ▶ Recognition of that which may occur
- ▶ Possibility that something negative may occur - in the future
- ▶ Actual or potential danger or unpleasant event or situation
- ▶ Personal harm to self or family
- ▶ Involves appraisal, analysis of the situation (the potential harm)
  
- ▶ BUT A THOUGHT CAN BE TALKED ABOUT

# ANXIETY



- ▶ A normal reaction to a present or future danger (previously feared)
- ▶ But it is a FEELING state, an emotion
- ▶ Marked by apprehension, uncertainty
- ▶ Also there is a sense that there is nothing that you can do about it
- ▶ An unpleasant feeling state - we feel it in our body

# WHEN DOES A FEAR → ANXIETY

- ▶ This unpleasant feeling state (anxiety) becomes activated as threatening situation (fear) or gets closer
- ▶ Aroused by a present danger
  - ▶ Thinking about it
  - ▶ Imagining it
  - ▶ (Repeated TV exposure)
- ▶ We can feel this anxiety

# Example of the Difference- Fear of Heights

- ▶ THOUGHT - FEAR

- ▶ You think about what it is like crossing the Bay Bridge
- ▶ “My car could go off the side of the bridge”
- ▶ “I have seen pictures of cars going into the bay”

- ▶ EMOTION - ANXIETY

- ▶ That feeling in your stomach as you are actually on the bridge
- ▶ Cold hands, sweating
- ▶ Sort of frozen at the wheels- Can't move too much
- ▶ Cannot concentrate

# Example of the Difference- Fear of Dogs

## ▶ THOUGHT - FEAR

- ▶ I am really scared to think of a dog running up the street towards me.
- ▶ He looks like he could bite me
- ▶ I have seen **movies** of dogs running up to a person and biting them
- ▶ Police dog, Doberman, Pit bull

## ▶ EMOTION - ANXIETY

- ▶ Freezing in place - numb
- ▶ Legs feel weak - might faint
- ▶ Heart pounding

# We have our fears (thoughts) and anxieties (emotions) to deal with



- ▶ Our thoughts are in our head - so let's start with the **THOUGHTS**
- ▶ Thoughts are cognitive
- ▶ We want facts to deal with this situation, to analyze it, make it less overwhelming
- ▶ Is the fear Rational - based on realistic information
- ▶ Is the fear Irrational - based on faulty information or imagined outcomes, assumptions
- ▶ Thoughts can become irrational due to many errors that we call "Cognitive Errors"

# Examples of Cognitive Errors

- ▶ **THOUGHT** - “People with underlying medical disorders can have serious complications”
- ▶ Catastrophizing or exaggerating - People with an underlying medical disorder will die
- ▶ Generalizing - people with any medical issues can have a serious case
- ▶ Fortune telling - My grandmother could possibly die
- ▶ Shoulds - I should have taken better care of myself - prevented my diabetes from getting worse
- ▶ Discounting positives - I know the curve is flattening in NY but that doesn't mean anything

# Ways to Deal with our Fears and Prevent Cognitive Errors

- ▶ Only consult legitimate sources for information about COVID-19 (sources presented later).
- ▶ Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19.
- ▶ Take breaks from news
- ▶ Talk to someone about the concerns you have related to COVID19
- ▶ Try to isolate the actual thought that is associated with the fear
  - ▶ Getting ill
  - ▶ Financial difficulties
  - ▶ Not being able to function if I get sick
  - ▶ Isolation
  - ▶ Worry about family and friends
  - ▶ Dying

# How can we help our thoughts to make them less overwhelming-

- ▶ Develop a new skill to focus thoughts on
- ▶ Try to do things that were pleasurable to you in the past or try something new that you have always wanted to do
- ▶ Keep in touch with family and friends - now even more important as we are being asked to formally distance
- ▶ Establish routines -
- ▶ Keep to a regular schedule -
- ▶ Things to do Online
  - ▶ Stream music or videos
  - ▶ Take a virtual museum tour
  - ▶ Participate in an online worship service or support group
  - ▶ Talk with friend about starting a Zoom group
- ▶ Avoid making major life decisions

# Anxiety = Emotion which sits in our body-can be manifested by our body in many ways

▶ Remember that fight, flight, freeze response - can cause

- ▶ Racing heart
- ▶ Shaking,
- ▶ sweating
- ▶ cold chills,
- ▶ numbness,
- ▶ tingling,
- ▶ nausea,
- ▶ knots in stomach,
- ▶ weak limbs,
- ▶ feel like passing out



## This anxiety can trigger what is called “A Stress Response which can have negative effects on the immune system

- ▶ In short spurts, cortisol can boost your immunity by:
  - ▶ limiting inflammation
  - ▶ Increasing energy
- ▶ But in time stress ->
  - ▶ increased cortisol levels ->inhibit immune response
  - ▶ Decreases body’s lymphocytes ( white blood cells that fight off infection)
  - ▶ Cause anxiety depression arthritis, fibromyalgia, lupus, psoriasis, Inflammatory bowel disease, faster heart rate and heart disease, gastric ulcers, Increased risk for type 2 diabetes

Especially important for seniors who may have a higher risk of experiencing emotional stress or anxiety

- ▶ Identified as high risk based on
  - ▶ decreased immune system responses (declines with age)
  - ▶ increased incidence of underlying medical or psychological disorders
  - ▶ some or the medications that we may be taking for these physical disorders (Steroids Thyroid replacement, stimulants, inhalers, antidepressants)

# Other Risk Factors can include:

- ▶ Sense of isolation due to :
  - ▶ Losses of significant others
  - ▶ Distance of family members
- ▶ Change in living environment, possibly with no new established social support
- ▶ Decreased mobility
- ▶ Progressive sensory loss- hearing, vision
- ▶ Being told to distance
- ▶ Decreased independence, possible decreased economic stability
- ▶ Reliance on others for daily assistance - family, friends or paid caregivers
- ▶ History of Exposure to other traumas, including violence (experienced or witnessed), abuse, assault, combat or previous epidemics
- ▶ Cognitive impairment

We have described anxiety is an emotion which sits in our body.

- ▶ Focus on the suggestions that strengthen our bodies such as
  - ▶ Eat healthy well-balanced meals
  - ▶ Get plenty of sleep
  - ▶ Routines
  - ▶ Avoid alcohol or caffeine
  - ▶ Take breaks
  - ▶ deep breathing ,
  - ▶ Stretch
  - ▶ Exercise regularly
- ▶ Mindfulness exercises - which I will end with(Take deep breaths, stretch or medicate)

# Reliable sources for information

- ▶ <https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness>
- ▶ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
- ▶ <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
- ▶ <https://bit.ly/mcgolderadultscovid19>
- ▶ <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/COVID19>
- ▶ <https://moco-caregiver.blogspot.com/2020/03/engagehome.html>

# Meditation



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iebciuBXCh4&t=19s>

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