

**Deeper Walk Int'l National Conference**

**The Joy Switch:**  
*activating your brain's relational circuit*

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thrivetoday.org




THRIVEtoday

**Healing And Growing Requires We Learn To Stay Relational!**

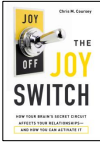

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**Learning To Stay Relational Requires Training And Practice**



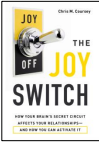


**The Joy Switch For Maturity And Healing**

- I recently finished a book called *The Joy Switch* and the focus is on how God created a "relational engine" in our brain which runs our lives and relationships.
- This engine dictates how well I live according to my values (compassion) and whether I can express the best of myself (character).
- When this engine runs smoothly, we *want* to be with other people. We genuinely care about what they are feeling and thinking. We are curious.
- When the engine goes offline, we shift into what I call "Airplane Mode" where our "relational signals" go down. We lose our peace and become relationally disconnected.
- Jim Wilder calls this state "Enemy Mode" because people we normally care about feel like enemies. We want to win, be right and "come out on top" in our interactions with others.

**The Joy Switch For Maturity And Healing**

- In Enemy Mode, we no longer care what others think or feel. We lose our joy. We lose all desire to be relational and interact. We shift into high-energy reactions (fight or flight) or we disconnect (freeze).
- This is where the Joy Switch comes in. **The Joy Switch refers to specific steps we can take to restore our relational engine, which is the brain's relational circuit.** The Joy Switch is the figurative button we press, the lever we pull or switch we push to activate our relational brain.
- I use the CARS acronym for the Joy Switch practices. CARS stands for:
  - Connection
  - Appreciation
  - Rest
  - Shalom my body

**Equipped and Connected**

Healing requires several important ingredients.

- First, we build emotional capacity to suffer well. Without capacity to handle the hard stuff our brain does not fully process pain. (BOUNCE by Warner and Hinn)
- Second, we grow relational skills so our brain learns to recover from big feelings.
- Third, we find God's peaceful presence in our pain. Part of what makes trauma "trauma" is we feel alone in our pain. Healing means we find God's presence in the painful places. We no longer feel isolated and forgotten. We learn to stay relational with the living God.

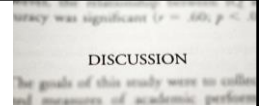
**PAUSE & REFLECT**

- Do you notice times you are doing great and feeling good, then something upsetting happens and you lose your joy? You say and do things you regret? What kinds of things cause you to "lose your cool" and become reactive and relationally disconnect?
  - Specific people or circumstances (feeling out of control, etc.)
  - Negative emotions
  - Pain and reminders of past pain (triggering)
  - Low blood sugar
  - Little sleep the night before
  - What else sends you into non-relational mode?
- When you go into non-relational mode, do you tend to be high-energy (attack) or low-energy (hide/sink into yourself)?

## Enhancing Your Brain's Relational Engine

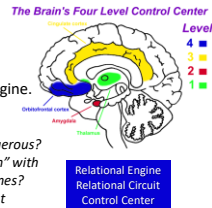


- All of us lose it. Some of us recover quickly, some not so much.
- The goal is *not* to avoid what upsets us, rather, to strengthen our ability to stay relational and quickly recover when things go wrong. This takes skill.
- Relational ruptures are inevitable but *repair* is the key to preserving our relationships and sustaining our joy. We can get really good at repairing!
- Our ability to stay relational during hardship and recover when things go wrong has to do with training, practice and examples.
- With some effort, we can improve our ability to stay relational and recover when things go wrong. This is good news!



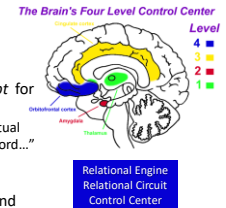
1. What helps you stay relational and calm down when you are upset or on the verge of reaching your limits?
  - A. Example: some quieting, music, nature, exercise, etc.
2. Overall we tend to be high-energy dominant or low-energy dominant. This means the things which help us the most will match our energy styles. Do you tend to be high or low energy?
  - A. Low Energy = soft music, a quiet place, time to be still, having some space, etc.
    - i. When I feel shame, I am hard on myself and beat myself up.
  - B. High Energy = energetic music, interaction, exercise, movement, etc.
    - i. When I feel shame, I tend to be hard on others and beat others up.

## The relational engine; what is it?



- On the right side of your brain is the relational engine.
- It has 4 levels:
  - Attachment: *do I know you?*
  - Assessment: *approach/avoid: are you safe - or dangerous?*
  - Attunement: *will you share my feelings and "enter in" with me? Are we able to weep and rejoice at the right times?*
  - Action: *how do I navigate this situation in a way that matches my identity and personal style?*
- This center largely develops during the first 2 years of life. It is in charge of the entire brain.
- Under high levels of stress, it shuts down the rest of the brain until the distress is gone.

## The relational engine; what is it?



- For the most part, this engine is nonverbal *except* for music and poetry.
  - "Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord..." Ephesians 5:19
- Everything from examples, experiences, facial expressions, voice tone, mannerisms, gestures and emotional stories and song impact this center.
- It is not trained through teaching or sharing information, however, anything with rhythm and tone will impact this center.
- This brain circuit requires practice and training.

## Our brain's relational circuit has limitations



- We are as good as our ability to manage what we feel. We cannot change bad things from happening to us, but we can learn the skills to better navigate and recover. Relational skills help us stay relational longer and recover faster when things go wrong.
- Elijah and Jezebel. Fearing for his life he ran away. 1 Kings 19
- Moses, the people and a rock. Exodus 17
- Peter and the rooster crow (trumpet call for the changing of the temple guard) Luke 22, etc.
- Can you think of more Bible examples where someone said or did something which led to undesirable results?

## Increasing Relational Horsepower



- Car enthusiasts add horsepower to their car engine to make their car faster. They must find ways to allow more (cold) air to move through the engine.
  - High performance air filters and exhaust systems, better wheels, supercharger, etc.
- Adding horsepower to our relational engine is all about 1. *how to stay relational longer* and 2. *how to recover faster when we slip out of relational mode.*
- Learning to use relational skills increases our Relational HP.
  - See the list of all 19 at [thrivetoday.org](http://thrivetoday.org).
- We build trust when we can stay relational and remember who we are during upset.

### The PEACE check

- Isaiah 9:6: Jesus is the Prince of Peace who freely gives peace to His children.
- Shalom (peace) is the sweet spot for our brain and body.
- The body is the canvas for your brain. Peace is a litmus test to notice how your brain and body are doing.
- PEACE is an acrostic for:
  - *Pay attention to my body*
  - *Evaluate my breathing*
  - *Attention and focus*
  - *Calm or busy thoughts*
  - *Easing muscle tension*



ity was significant ( $r = .40, p < .05$ )

DISCUSSION

The goals of this study were to collect measures of academic performanc

- Review the PEACE elements and discuss what you notice in your body and mind right now.
  - *Pay attention to my body*
  - *Evaluate my breathing*
  - *Attention and focus*
  - *Calm or busy thoughts*
  - *Easing muscle tension*



### Am I relational right now? (Am I stuck in Enemy Mode?)



- I just want to make a problem, person or feeling go away.
- I don't want to listen to what others feel or say.
- My mind is "locked onto" something upsetting.
- I don't want to be connected to ? (someone I usually like)
- I just want to get away, or fight or I freeze.
- I more aggressively interrogate, judge and fix others.

### CAKE

#### Do I Feel Relational Right Now?



- Curiosity – *Am I curious?*
- Appreciation – *Can I feel appreciation right now?*
- Kindness – *Do I want to be kind toward others?*
- Eye Contact – *Do I look people in the eye?*

### Are you feeling relational?

#### CARS

- Connection
- Appreciation
- Rest
- Shalom my Body
  - Specific body-quieting exercises.
  - See demonstrations on YouTube at: [Chris Coursey - THRIVE](#)



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**BEYOND SURVIVAL:**  
*the Key to*  
**Thriving in a**  
**Pandemic**



Led by Chris Coursey  
October 17<sup>th</sup>  
1-5pm Eastern  
Details at [thrivetoday.org](http://thrivetoday.org)

**The Joy Switch:**

*How Your Brain's Secret Circuit  
Affects Your Relationships –  
And How You Can Activate It*

Released January 5<sup>th</sup> 2021

More at [thrivetoday.org](http://thrivetoday.org)

