

# Enlightenment and the Brain Key Ideas

By Mark Waldman



What, exactly, *is* Enlightenment?

How do you get there?

Even more intriguing: will enlightenment actually change your brain?

After a decade of brain-scan research conducted at Jefferson University and at the University of Pennsylvania, the answer is a definitive *YES!*

In fact the neurological changes can be so powerful, it can change your entire worldview.

And so I ask you: Do you *really* want to be enlightened?

Do you really want to shatter some of your most sacred beliefs?

Because that is what enlightenment will do for you!

Throughout this webinar, I'm going to guide you through a dozen experiential exercises that will *prepare* your brain for enlightenment, and by the end of this program I'm willing to bet that you'll come away with some amazing insights that you can immediately apply to improving your brain and your life. Also, I want to bring your attention the live chat room that's accessible on this page. Share your thoughts with my team!

Now I want you to *mindfully* yawn. Concentrate on how each yawn actually feels, and then notice if your awareness deepens. Ready? Let's begin, and even if you don't feel like yawning, fake it! Breathe in slowly and deeply, and make a sighing sound as you exhale. Now pause and notice if your awareness has changed a tiny bit. Yawn again, more deeply.....and notice if your mood is beginning to change. .... Now do another full, deep yawn....and sit quietly for 10 seconds. Can you feel how your awareness is changing? Do you feel more present? Now I'm willing to bet that at this

moment, you are not having any negative feelings, and hardly any thoughts. That's the power of a single mindful yawn.

So any time you're feeling or tired or irritated, try a couple of mindful yawns. It dramatically lowers stress and anxiety in less than a minute, and when you do it at work, you'll see how it boosts your performance.

In fact, the more you do anything mindfully, the more you prepare your brain for enlightenment.

In our research studies, we've asked thousands of people to describe what they think enlightenment is, and we report our findings in our new book, *How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain*. We discovered that everyone experiences enlightenment in a different way. Here are some the words that others have used: Light. Expansion. Connection. Awareness. Knowing. Freedom, Oneness, Unity, Silence, Emptiness, Bliss, God, and my favorite word, TRANSFORMATION.

All these words, and the word you came up with, describe different qualities of the Enlightenment experience, and the more you repeat ANY word that has deep meaning for you, your brain will begin searching for experiences that match that particular word. I think that's amazing! Indeed, most of those inner value words can turn on 1200 stress-reducing genes, and that's a Harvard University study.

Have you ever had an "AHA" moment when you suddenly discovered something new? We all have. This is the little "e" experience of Western enlightenment. It may only last for a moment, but it will give you a greater insight into yourself, or a problem you might have been struggling with for years.

Take a moment, right now, close your eyes again, and recall an "aha" experience from your past, a time when you discovered something new about yourself or the world. For example: a time when you realized what love actually meant, or a time when you realized how beautiful a sunset could be. Take a moment to relive one of the most amazing moments in your life and notice how it makes you smile. That's the memory of a small "e" enlightenment experience. And we now know that each "aha" moment permanently changes a small part of your brain.

It may not shatter your worldview, but we believe that each small insight will gradually lead you to the big “E” experience of personal transformation. But again, only if you desire it, and only if you consciously seek it out.

Western enlightenment is an “AHA” experience that you can learn how to have regularly, but Eastern enlightenment is an “OH WOW!” experience, one that happens spontaneously, and one that permanently changes your beliefs. As we explain in our book, you can’t demand this big “E” experience, but you can ask for it, and you can create intense rituals to speed up the process.

But there’s a risk: if you do not carefully prepare your mind for these abrupt changes in brain chemistry, you can literally blow a neurological fuse. For that reason, in our book, and in *NeuroWisdom 101*, I provide you with a number of step-by-step exercises to prepare your brain for transformation.

Andy Newberg has identified some universal qualities of enlightenment: Unity, Intensity, Clarity, Surrender, and most important: a transformation of your core beliefs.

UNITY is the feeling of being connected to everything, and we believe that most people have briefly experienced this unique level of awareness many times. Close your eyes for a moment and see if you can recall a time when you felt deeply connected to something or someone: to nature, the universe, or god. That is one part of the enlightenment experience.

The second quality is INTENSITY: In our survey of over 2000 people, which we’ll share with you in our book, this was the most common element cited: the experience, while it occurs, feels super real.

The third universal quality of enlightenment is CLARITY. It brings a new understanding into your life. And everything, at least for the moment, makes perfect sense.

The fourth quality is SURRENDER. You don’t control the experience; the experience takes you for a ride.

The fifth quality is TRANSFORMATION. Something fundamentally changes in your worldview, and you can never go back to your old ways of thinking.

Here's one of the most important lessons I've learned from our research: you don't need to follow some guru's advice. There's no right or wrong way to meditate or pray. In fact, the more you personalize your meditation – or a diet plan, or a workout routine – the more benefits you receive. The formula is simple: Ask for enlightenment, create an intense ritual, surrender yourself to it, and then listen deeply to your intuition as your brain returns to normal.

If you really want to transform your life, seek out every opportunity to change your old beliefs, to discover something new every day, and to savor every insight you gain.

And don't forget to create a daily practice of self-reflection, learning how to go in and out of different states of awareness. I'll show you how to do this in my NeuroWisdom program, but it doesn't have to be your typical 30-60 minute meditation. You can devote just 1 minute an hour and achieve astonishing results. Read our book so you can understand what enlightenment is and how it changes your brain, and then get one of my audio programs to take you deeper. Reading about enlightenment is useful, but listening to guided exercises adds another dimension that makes it easier to make positive changes to your brain.

My goal, as always, is to bring you the best science-based strategies that will enhance the performance of your brain and help you to experience a little more joy and peace. Then maybe, just maybe, we can all work together to bring a little more peace into this world. Thank you, and good night!