

Connection is everything. It establishes all the things that you want in life and is superseded by belief. The definition of connection is "a relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else." I am talking granularly about connection because everything that I am hopeful for this year is based on it. Both how we connect, and who/what we connect with are important and necessary.

I was reading about synaptic pruning yesterday. Interestingly, in one study, adults had an average of 41% lower neuron connections than that of a newborn. Have you noticed that you may have been really good at something as a child, like playing the piano for example, but as an adult, you seem to have lost the ability to play? Synaptic pruning throughout one's life can be compared to the process of chiseling and molding stone into a statue. Once the statue is complete, the weather will begin to erode the statue, and this represents the way the connections in our brains are removed when they are not being actively used. We allow the Oregon Trails in our brains to become overgrown until they finally disappear altogether.

This can be beneficial to us for two reasons. When we start to eliminate things from our lives that no longer serve us, we start to remove those connections inside our brains. Conversely, when we are selective about what we want in our lives and make definitive statements and declarations, we strengthen those connections. They become even stronger as we practice them.

What are the strong connections and habits in your life, and how can you use them to your benefit? Mine is coffee- there are few things that can keep me from a cup of joe first thing in the morning. I've shared before how I use this habit to empty my dishwasher, and then complete a 4-minute workout every morning. I like to call it piggybacking a habit, although James Clear calls it habit stacking. I highly recommend piggybacking two or three habits onto one well-established habit.

Cues can help as well. For example, I wanted my morning ritual to be more consistent (consistency is my word for the year!), so every night I leave my journal, glasses, and AirPods on my chair. This cue helps me because those things sitting in my chair in my otherwise neat office are a gentle reminder of what I need to be doing first. And because of the hand-brain connection that helps you embed these important new habits in your brain, using a pencil or pen and actually writing things out can be a huge needle mover in your life as well.

Tiny refinements each day make strong connections over time. We need to constantly set ourselves up for success. Write down the things that you are frustrated with, and what triggers and cues you can use to connect to the habit you want. Your environment either sets you up for success or for failure. Be specific, intentional, and consistent in creating your connections.