

ferguskane

scribblings on psychology and sustainability.

After Reading This, Your Brain Will Never Be The Same



In the best tradition of such articles, this image has no real connection to the content.

After reading this, your brain will quite simply never be the same again. My ideas, transformed by my brain into a series of muscle stimulating electro-chemical nerve impulses and transferred by my fingers into my computer's systems, will have been launched across the internet's intricate web, eventually spawning a torrent of photons that will have streamed though your eyes and onto your retinae, unleashing another chain of bio-electro-chemical reactions of almost unimaginable complexity.

Your brain networks will have been activated and deactivated; hormones secreted and metabolised; neurotransmitters released, sucked up, converted and degraded; your genome read; proteins synthesised, cut up and stuck back together, synapses formed and broken – and at the trendy edge of science, your brain cells will have experienced epigenetic change. None of this is fully reversible. You'll likely never be able to completely forget that you read this, no matter how hard you try. In fact, the harder you try to forget, the more these words will worm their way into your biology.

Sorry about that.

Of course, although this is all incredible, it's also absolutely normal. There is nothing very special about these words. Your brain is being changed all the time, by everything and anything that stimulates any of your various different senses. And should you for any reason, find yourself in a sensory deprivation tank, well, your brain will self-stimu-

late to a quite worrying extent. The cascades of psycho-bio-electro-chemical events will never stop.

Well, only once.

So next time you read an headline like: Doctors Explain How Hiking Actually Changes Our Brains or Science Proves Premarital Sex Rewires the Brain, I suggest the best response is a yawn (well actually, my recommended response to that second link is a bit more than a yawn; indeed I recommend you activate your 'disgust at the hijacking of science to promote your own agenda' network. If you've not developed such a network yet, please do.).

None of this is to say that the science behind these headlines is not interesting or important. It often is. Almost as often as it's misrepresented to get the most advertising revenue possible.

(By the way, if you doubt that my words permanently altered your brain, ask yourself, if they did not, how it is that you can still remember what I wrote, and how is it that you'll most likely still recognise those words in a year's time?)