

The NASA Experiment

..... source unknown (adapted and modified by Amy Fox)

Back in the early days of the space program, NASA designed an experiment to determine how its astronauts would cope without gravity, particularly with being upside down in space. NASA needed to know if the environment of space would have some unexpected negative consequences that would endanger the astronauts or their mission.

NASA scientists fitted each of the astronauts with a pair of convex goggles which turned everything they saw upside down. The astronauts had to wear the goggles 24 hours a day, 7 days per week – even when they were asleep.

Although they experienced physical symptoms of anxiety and stress initially, they gradually adapted to their new "realities."

On the 26th day of the experiment, something unexpected happened. One of the astronauts was able to see things right-side up again even though he continued to wear the goggles 24 hours a day.

What the scientists discovered is that, between 26-30 days of this continuous stream of new input, one by one, all the astronauts were seeing things the right side-up despite wearing the convex goggles. Basically, each of their brains had formed enough new neural connections to turn this lie into the truth. They had literally re-created their reality!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS

Success is often in the small, mundane things. The little things we often overlook or take for granted. Something as seemingly insignificant as breathing.

Notice your breath here...

Conscious breathing– choosing to consciously regulate our breathing pattern– reduces stress, boosts our immune system and increases energy. One tiny shift when practiced and repeated yield big gains.

Consciously deepen your breath here....

DURING CLASS

AFTER TELLING THE STORY

NASA repeated the experiment with a slight change. This time some of the astronauts took the goggles off for a short period of time partway through the experiment.

When they put the goggles back on and left them on until the 30th day, their worlds were still upside down, but when they continued on, at 26-30 consecutive days wearing the goggles, the same thing happened– everything was suddenly right-side up again.

What the scientists learned from these experiments is that the brain requires approximately 30 uninterrupted days for new neural connections to form - for new habits to form.

What you practice is what you promote. What are you reinforcing in this moment?

CLOSING CLASS

What we practice, we promote and what we promote becomes reality.

What thought this week can you strengthen and build that allows you to lead a life you love in a body you love?

EXTRAS

A great take home assignment for your students is to have them do what's known as The Chain Method.

The Chain Method is all about daily, consistent action that moves us towards our goal and success.

Your students will want to pick a task that is meaningful enough to make a difference, but simple enough that they can get it done.

For example, it would be wonderful if you could write 10 pages a day for your book, but that's not a sustainable chain to build. Similarly, it sounds great in theory to be able to deadlift like a maniac every day, but in practice you'll probably be overtrained and burnt out.

A better approach is to write or strength train every day as consistency yields results.