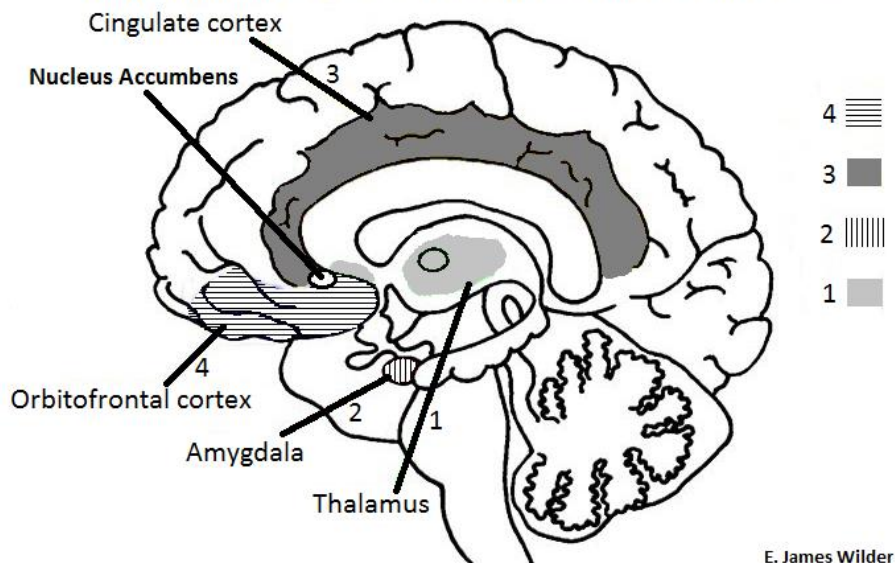


Right Hemisphere Four-Level Control Center Brain Model



Level 1 – the attachment level (Thalamus & Basil Ganglia: Attachment – helps regulate dopamine)

Our personal reality and attachment are created on the ground floor of the control center. Our brains pick who and what is important to us through structures including the thalamus and basal ganglion. One part of this network, called the nucleus accumbens, is the brain's pleasure and pain center. This nucleus contributes strongly to addictions, sexuality and most importantly, our attachment to those we love. The attachment level is sometimes called the "deep limbic system" and lights up when we want to bond with others. If we do not receive a response in return we feel pained, rejected, unloved, abandoned, jilted, dumped, alone or unwanted. The attachment level probably inspires more songs, stories, movies, relationships and crimes than any other structure.

Level 2 – the basic evaluation level (Amygdala: Guard shack – Life is good, bad or scary helps regulate adrenaline)

Once something or someone has gotten the attention of level one, the information is passed along to the guard shack at level two for a security screening. This level, called the amygdala, has three opinions: good, bad or scary. These opinions are entirely subjective and permanent once they are formed. This level soon has opinions about chocolate, loud noises, elevators, airplanes, angry faces, dogs and almost all of life. Anyone who has tried to battle the opinions by level two about heights, airplanes or cocaine know how unchanging these views actually are in spite of all evidence and persuasion.

Level 3 – the mutual-mind level (Cingulate Cortex: Synchronization – helps regulate serotonin/ resolve negative emotions)

This structure, on the third floor of the brain, provides us with our mutual-mind experiences with other people. Because we can share something of what others experience, we can become human, form relationships, interact predictably, synchronize our internal rhythms with life around us, and understand what it means to be ourselves. The cingulate cortex is the first level of the control center to have a will and conscious experience. As a result of being cortex the cingulate can learn how to adapt to others. Because it has a curved shape something like a banana, we have begun to call it the "mental banana." Training level three to have mutual-mind experiences with others that are accurate and still cover a full range of feelings is what helps us become fully alive and human. Refurbishing rusty cingulates is the purpose of the Banana Growers Association.

Level 4 – the Captain (Right Orbital Prefrontal Cortex: Identity – helps focus attention and answer "who am I?")

The right orbital prefrontal cortex (PFC) in the top floor of the control center has executive control over the rest of the brain when properly developed. This PFC spot thinks of itself as "me" and this Captain runs the brain when under stress. When trained, the Captain has the capacity to quiet the guard shack, direct our moral choices, be creative, think flexibly and even influence such delicate functions as our immune system. When the Captain is strong enough, and the three floors below him have sufficient capacity, the mind can resist becoming traumatized when things go badly and maintain a strong, positive and determined identity.