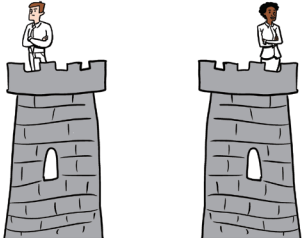


# UNIT 3: INNER WEATHER REPORT

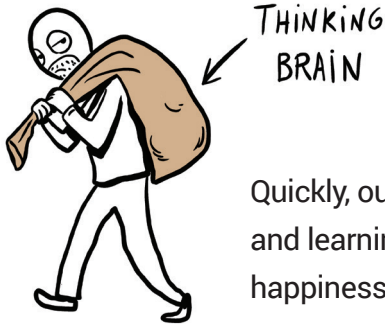


**I**nside your brain, you have what can be loosely described as two lookouts in castle towers.

AMYGDALA

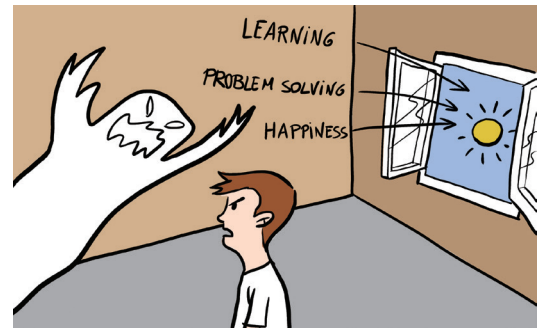


Named the **amygdala**, these two almond-shaped sentries eavesdrop on everything entering the brain – everything we see, hear, smell or touch.



**Lightning fast, they tell you whether situations appear familiar and safe or unfamiliar and threatening.** When a potential threat is detected, an alarm bell goes off inside us and our thinking brain can get kidnapped.

Quickly, our attention focuses on the threat and learning, problem solving and even happiness go out the window.

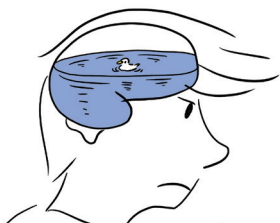


**If we are facing actual physical threats, the amygdala can be lifesaving.**

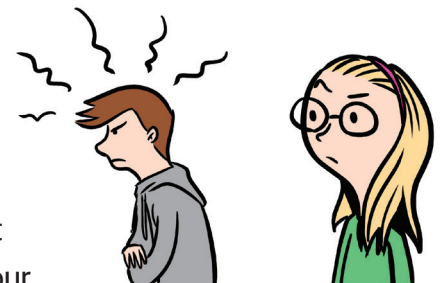
This early warning, rapid response system helps us quickly get out of harm's way like with a fast-moving car heading towards us or a mean dog. Many situations can be stressful and uncomfortable but few are truly threatening.

**Our amygdala is not very good at seeing the difference between a real threat and an imagined one.** We can freak out when we see a snake in our front yard that seconds later turns out to be a hose. Or someone

we care about says something that seems to put us down. Instead of checking out the truth with our friend, we either lash back in anger or withdraw our friendship.



Reactive Emotions floods our body and brain. Ugh!



If we are going to be at our best and have our cortex making smart decisions, not rushed or inaccurate ones, we need to become aware of and manage these emotions.

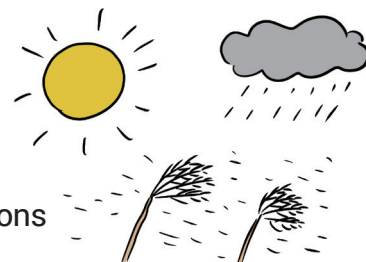


**Emotions make life really interesting, fun and colorful.** They motivate us, determine what we care about and move us into action. If we pay attention to them, we can learn a lot about ourselves.



But if we get too worried, too angry, or even too bored, a little snowstorm can turn into an avalanche. Then, we create a lot of drama around us, make mistakes and our relationships suffer.

**Our emotions are kind of like the weather.** In one day, we can go from sunshine, to a rainstorm, to a hurricane and back — meaning, we experience lots of emotions. We have uplifting high-energy emotions like excitement, courage, happiness, and joy. High-energy stormy emotions include anger and frustration. Then we experience those low-energy emotions like patience, kindness, and calm that recharge us. And let's not forget the low energy emotions like impatience, hopelessness, and boredom that drain our inner battery.



**Keep in mind that there are no bad emotions.** Life happens. When you get a bad grade or have over-cooked, soggy vegetables, who wouldn't feel disappointed? Yuck! If you are happy all the time, you wouldn't be stretched to grow or change.

**All emotions can serve a purpose but, we have more power to manage them than we may know.**

### What is your inner weather like right now?

Think about the past few days and make a list of activities, conversations and events you took part in. Try to use one or two words to describe your feelings during these activities.

### Then ask yourself:

What kind of inner weather helps you and what kind gets in the way of you being your best self?

