



## BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



### Finding Inspiration in the New Year

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. It's a brand new year, but after 2020 and 2021 many of you may need some inspiration to face the year ahead.*

And just like that, it's 2022. We are usually excited about the infinite possibilities of the next 12 months, but many of you may be less than enthusiastic about the year ahead. Whether you have a case of post-holiday letdown or are just feeling “meh” about life in general, you may need some help in finding inspiration.

#### **What is inspiration?**

Sometimes it's hard to get motivated. You have plenty to do — deadlines at work/school, activities with the kids, caring for aging parents, taking care of a household — but you just can't seem to get started. Inspiration can help motivate you. When you feel inspired you want to do something, or you have an idea about what to do and how to do it. Inspiration awakens you to new possibilities and propels you from apathy to possibility. Inspiration is often mentioned as something that “strikes” you, like a vision or a “Eureka moment.”

#### **Why inspiration matters**

Several years ago, psychologists and researchers Todd Thrash and Andrew Elliot conducted a series of studies in an attempt to find a way to measure inspiration and the feelings of being inspired. They found that inspiration has three primary characteristics: it transcends your regular limitations and leads to a sense of clarity and awareness; it creates a powerful drive to act; and that inspiration happens spontaneously and without intention.

Thrash and Elliot developed an Inspiration Scale. The scale includes a series of questions that asks you to rate yourself on how often you:

- Experience inspiration.
- Encounter or experience something that inspires you.

- Are inspired to do something.
- Feel inspired.

Their research suggested people who scored higher on the inspiration scale are more open to new experiences and become more absorbed in their tasks. In other words, the more open you are to inspiration, the more likely you are to experience it. Inspiration also makes you more creative, increases your sense of well-being, and moves you closer to your goals.

The results of this research were published in the [Journal of Personality and Social Psychology](#).

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

*It's easy to become frustrated when you are feeling uninspired but give yourself a break. Remember, progress is a series of small steps taken consistently. We recommend these actions to help you have your "Eureka moment."*

1. **Don't give up.** It's easy to decide you just aren't talented, or motivated, when you are feeling down. Try adding the word "yet" to some of those negative statements running through your head. Turn "I don't know what to do" into "I don't know what to do, yet." This implies that a solution is on its way.
2. **Look to others.** It's a good thing to look to others for sources of inspiration. Let the ideas, beliefs, actions of others help guide you to greater heights.
3. **Take a break.** Walk away and allow yourself to refocus. Focusing on something completely different than the task at hand can help you reframe your situation.
4. **Find a partner.** Team up with others who are seeking inspiration. You may find that the creative ideas you are bouncing off each other can be used to build something wonderful.
5. **Take care of yourself.** There are days when you just won't feel inspired. Maybe you need to spend the day on the couch in your sweats, binge-watching Netflix or WEDU-PBS. Tomorrow you can start fresh and get back to achieving your goals.

**BE BRAIN HEALTHY and adopt a lifestyle** that includes thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that promote brain health protective factors:

- Stress resilience
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Social connection
- Emotional wellbeing
- Meaning and Purpose
- Cognitive stimulation and creativity
- Engaging with nature
- General health
- Positive impacts

**About the Brain Health Initiative ([www.brainhealthinitiative.org](http://www.brainhealthinitiative.org))**

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, uses a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is building brain healthy communities, cultures that foster brain health protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the ***Be Brain Healthy*** movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.*** To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).