

Collapsing the Ego to Develop Resilience to Depression

Class Summary

- Circuitry in our brain called the Default Mode Network, our Black Box, is our ego. It is the area of the brain which identifies with the self
- Very often, stress is caused by us trying to protect our ego, as we fight to maintain a position, viewpoint or image
- The fight and resistance involved in protecting our ego extends psychological stress throughout our brain and body
- When we're under stress, our black box disengages from the external world. We continually ruminate about how we will protect our ego and fail to acknowledge any evidence that contradicts our point of view
- Brain imaging research shows that our black box recruits the amygdala, which is heightened by the stress
- As we continue to fight and resist, the amygdala releases cortisol, which has an inflammatory effect on our body and brain
- Such systemic inflammation has been proven to cause inflammatory depression
- The antidote to this is learning to submit your ego, which comes with practice of identifying your thoughts and feelings
- Through the mask exercise, we can identify what it is that we're projecting to the world and why. The answer to this question is often fear and what we think we might lose if we don't protect our ego
- By submitting the ego and stopping the fight against ourselves, we can regain balance in our autonomic nervous system and develop resilience to inflammatory depression