

# The Impact of Technology on Our Culture and Our Ability to Adjust - An Applied Neuroscience Approach

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## Summary

This paper offers a contextual understanding of the role technology and culture have played in shaping our thoughts and behaviors and what we can do to live happier, healthier, more fulfilling lives starting right where we are. I will demonstrate why there is a need to engage in a daily practice to help strengthen and condition new thoughts and behaviors to help adjust to the rapidly changing world around us.

Our culture promotes ease and comfort. When we are passively engaged in our day to day lives, we accept and condition ideas that are not our own and then integrate them into our thoughts, behaviors, and beliefs. Simultaneously, on a global scale, people are experiencing emotional health challenges and a lack of fulfillment.

The path of ease and comfort does not lead to happiness and fulfillment. We will not find true happiness and fulfillment without growth and challenge. When we intentionally practice getting uncomfortable, we strengthen and condition ourselves to be more flexible and open to new experiences and possibilities. This practice leads to happier, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.

## Background

There has been a global effort to transition energy dependency from oil and gas to electricity. This effort is paving the way for an even greater level of dependency on new technologies. Now, faster than at any other point in history, technology is playing a more impactful role in our day to

day lives. While the primary reasoning is to help save the planet, there are parallel roots just as deep in personal convenience. Technology makes everything easier. In 2008 Pixar Animation Studios produced "WALL-E". The plot is set in the 29th century. Humans have left earth and they are enabled by technology to exist almost entirely without movement to the point they are blobs in personal motorized transportations devices. Everything is easy. They barely move. And their lives are stuck on surviving. The planet simply....Exists. In the film society has become completely "unintelligent" and "unchallenged". Clearly we are not in the 29th century, but we can all see the trajectory of our culture and the role technology plays in our day to day lives. In 2021, the film was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant."

In the 2021 Winter Olympics, famous American gymnast Simone Bile made headlines when she took herself out of the competition. The issue at hand was her mind was not in the right space to compete. It wasn't safe. We are talking about a seasoned veteran of gymnastic competition tied for the most decorated gymnast of all time. This event shook the world and put mental health at the forefront of a global conversation. The movie "WALL-E" and Simone Biles are two simple examples highlighting a point. Technology and modern culture can be great, but there is still a

great need for each of us to practice methods of strengthening and conditioning our mindset so we can live happier, healthier, and more fulfilling lives connected to our own truth.

### **Theory, Method, Workflow**

To support this proposition I researched and have drawn truths from Experiential Learning Theory (aka ELT) created by David Kolb, Cognitive and Behavioral Flexibility (aka neural dynamics), and Joseph Campbell's, "The Hero's Journey". From the time we are infants we are entered into frameworks that help us learn and grow. In learning and growing we experience fulfilling rewards. It is important as adults to continue to engage in similar frameworks for similar reasons.

When we practice simple changes to our existing conditioned thoughts and behaviors, we first experience a challenge or resistance. It can be tough. As we continue to practice and train our minds and bodies to think and move differently, it becomes easier. The beauty is that the whole exercise is not an either/or conversation. We are simply expanding our capabilities and how open we are to considering new possibilities. Similar to physical fitness, in time our minds become stronger and more flexible.

In application, we can pick anything our current conditioning may be resistant to. The idea is to create a healthy practice of getting at least a little uncomfortable mentally and physically. Actively explore the unknown outside of yourself and inside of yourself. Push the boundaries of your conditioning. I started to pick challenges (a kind of framework) which helped to push me

out of my comfort zone. One area in particular for me is the cold. I can't stand to be cold, so I started to exercise out in the cold every day for months. I also started to read a lot more exploring new ideas. Soon I started to practice getting uncomfortable in more creative ways like turning the shower on cold at the end of my nice comfortable warm shower. Also, I started having conversations with people who think and believe differently than I do and just listened to understand. Customize this concept to your own life in ways that support your individual goals. Soon your life will begin to change.

### **Results, Observations, Conclusions**

Making a practice of getting uncomfortable and exploring the unknown inside of you and outside of you give reason to be excited. Anytime you are making a practice of getting uncomfortable and exploring the unknown you are going to learn and grow. Soon my experience and views of life began to evolve.

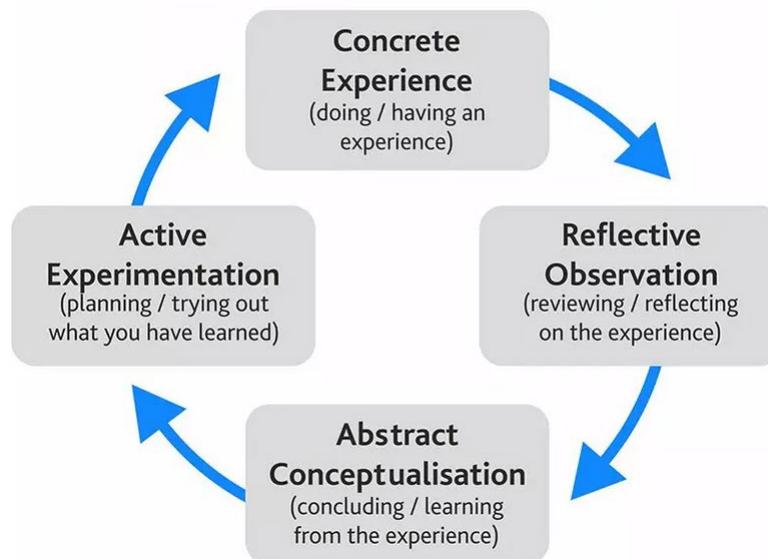
In the early stages of this process I first experienced a connection with my internal strength and confidence. As my practice continued I noticed a greater sense of awareness and calm. Things I once thought I desperately wanted in my life became options I could choose or not choose. Also, my stress and anxiety levels were much lower. I was happier all around. I no longer react to life nor do I wait for a traumatic experience before I make needed adjustments in my thoughts and behaviors. I see all contrast as a learning and growth opportunity. My mindset is much more healthy, confident, secure, and balanced.

The world is changing faster than ever. When we practice strengthening and conditioning our mindset, we are better prepared for inevitable changes and challenges in our lives. When we incorporate methods of training our cognitive and behavioral flexibility, we empower ourselves to grow and connect with ourselves and others. Often in ways we didn't expect. We allow life to surprise us. No one knows what tomorrow will bring. By being intentional and with consistent practice, we can connect with our confidence and our truth so we can live happier, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.

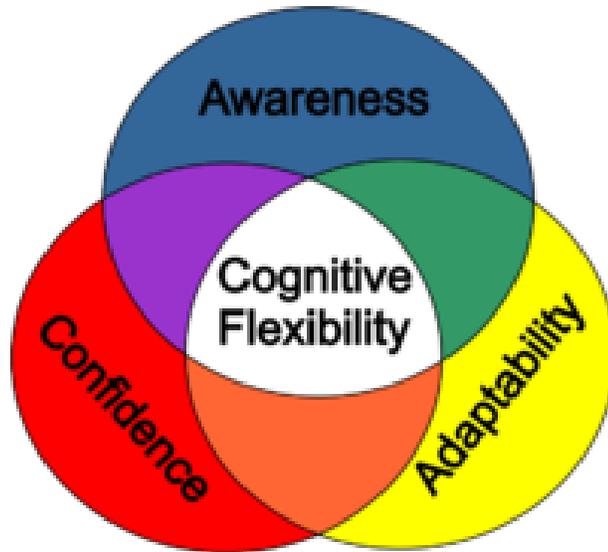
## References

1. David Kolb - Paper on Experiential Learning Theory  
<https://learningfromexperience.com/downloads/research-library/experiential-learning-theory-working-paper.pdf>

## The Experiential Learning Cycle



2. Cognitive and Behavioral Flexibility  
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3. The Hero's Journey - Popularized by Joseph Campbell in 1949 with his book, "The Hero with a Thousand Faces"

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s\\_journey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s_journey)

