



LETTING GO

TRUSTING YOUR UNCONSCIOUS BRAIN'S CREATIVE PROCESS

When you're working to solve a particular problem, your instinct will usually be to continue striving until you find a solution. According to neuroscience, however, after working on a problem for some time, often the smartest thing you can do is **let go and trust in the power of your unconscious brain's creative process to help unearth the answer.**

Interestingly, your unconscious brain processes exponentially more information than your conscious brain. It is filtering millions of bits of data every second. And in the words of neuroscientist David Eagleman, it "bends, breaks, and blends this information" which leads to new insights or solutions. Letting go – or not consciously focusing on the problem – creates relative quiet in your mind which allows the subtler associations and ideas of the unconscious brain to be detected by the conscious brain.

Letting go also creates the conditions for far less stress and far greater flow. There's an interesting principle that comes from Taoist philosophy called *wu wei*. Directly translated in English, this means "Not-Doing," but what it really means is not overdoing, over-extending, or trying to force things to happen. It's all about doing things more effortlessly. The philosophy offers a fable that goes like this:

Water flows downstream, we are floating merrily along, then we hit a log jam. We can get very upset and try to bash our way through the obstruction. We lose a lot of energy and we don't get anything done and we might even harm ourselves. When we are in an obstruction, most often the best thing to do is to be quiet and wait. Because eventually, the water is going to rise and go over that obstruction.

You can apply this wise teaching to the problem-solving process. There's nothing wrong with working actively towards a solution, but when you reach the point where you're stuck (obstructed) and can't break through, you can practice the wisdom of *wu wei* – letting go, pausing, and trusting that with a little bit of time and patience, the answer (or critical next step) will arise on its own.