**Caveman Mind VS Modern Mind: How are minds were evolved to work**

Your mind is trying to save you from getting hurt. That’s its number one job. So yes, there’s all this unhelpful stuff your mind keeps saying to you. It’s not your mind deliberately trying to make life difficult. It’s just your mind doing its number one job: Trying to keep you safe to save you from pain. Your mind’s not defective or abnormal; it’s evolved to do this. Below are examples of the caveman mind versus the modern mind in terms of the evolution of the human brain and its function:

**CAVEMAN MIND:** As a caveman, you must fit in with the group. If you are alone, you soon die. The wolves will eat you for breakfast! (If you survive past breakfast, the bears will get you for lunch.) So your mind compares you to others in the group: “Am I fitting in, contributing enough, following the rules? Am I doing anything that might get me thrown out?”

**MODERN MIND:** Comparing yourself to others, fear of negative evaluation, fear of judgment, fear of rejection.

**CAVEMAN MIND:** When encountering real physical threats e.g. dangerous animals, bad weather, treacherous terrain, rival tribes “Watch out! You might get hurt. Stay away! Take cover!”

**MODERN MIND:** When encountering anything that gives rise to discomfort, we respond to it the same ways as cavemen responded to real physical threats. So our minds start reason-giving – coming up with all the reasons why I can’t do it, shouldn’t do it, shouldn’t have to do it. This is our mind trying to protect us from danger.

**CAVEMAN MIND:** Conservation of physical resources is vitally important to a stone age person. If this task or challenge involves significant expenditure of time/energy and there’s a good chance of failure, then it’s safer not to undertake it.

**MODERN MIND:** Our modern minds love to conjure up fear of failure. And they readily generate hopelessness (“There’s no point –I’ll only fail”) – especially if there have been failures in the past. Also shows up as your mind telling you to give up if you’re not getting quick or easy results.

**CAVEMAN MIND:** You need more food, more water, better weapons, better shelter. (The cavepeople who thought this way lived longer, had more offspring.)

**MODERN MIND:** Greed; dissatisfaction; craving; wanting; it’s never enough; I need more, more, more!

**CAVEMAN MIND:** tells you to avoid physical threats like bears and wolves; this keeps you safe!

**MODERN MIND:** treats painful thoughts & feelings same way as bears and wolves; tells you to avoid them!

**CAVEMAN MIND:** “Watch out! There might be a bear in that cave. You could get eaten. Watch out!” “That shadow on the horizon. That could be an enemy from another clan. You could get speared.”

**MODERN MIND**: Worrying, catastrophizing, predicting the worst, avoiding anything that scares you.

**CAVEMAN MIND:** “Watch out! There was a sabre-tooth tiger on that hill last week. It might come back!”

**MODERN MIND:** Projecting the painful past into a scary future: ‘It happened before so it’ll happen again.’

**CAVEMAN MIND:** You survive an encounter with a bear or a wolf, so it’s useful to replay it; to go over the events in your mind and remember what you did to survive, so that you are better prepared for next time.

**MODERN MIND:** We go over and over painful memories; dwelling on them, reliving them, even when there’s nothing useful to learn, or the lesson has been well and truly learned.

Does this sound a bit like your mind, at times? After 200,000 years of evolution, our minds are doing this kind of thing all the time!