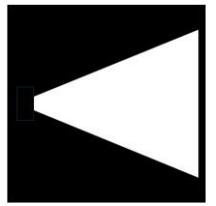


# The Accepting Brain?



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## Overview

Why do some people radiate calm in the face of chaos, while others overthink themselves into exhaustion? The answer may lie not just in mindset, but in brain structure. A study using machine learning and brain scans found that people who habitually practise acceptance, welcoming emotions and thoughts without judgement, show striking differences in both grey and white matter.

They're not just different in what they think. Their brains are built differently too.

## Key Findings & Insights

### Two Brain Networks, Two Styles of Being

High accepters, those more open to emotions and experiences, show reduced brain volume in regions linked to rumination and self-referential thinking. These include the default mode network, often busy replaying the past or worrying about the future. At the same time, these individuals have more grey and white matter in areas linked to conscious control and awareness, like the orbitofrontal cortex and parietal lobes.

### It's Not Just About Personality

High accepters weren't more agreeable or conscientious, but they did score significantly higher in 'Openness to Experience.' This suggests a deeper orientation to life: more curiosity, less clinging. Interestingly, emotional intelligence didn't differ, implying that acceptance is a skill you practice, not just a trait you're born with.

### Why That Matters

Ruminating, replaying, resisting, these habits wear us down. If we could reduce their grip not through willpower but by reshaping our brain's tendencies, the implications for wellbeing, resilience and even therapy are huge.

This research adds weight to the idea that mental fitness isn't all mindset. It's also matter, grey and white.

## Conclusion

You might already practise acceptance. But what if you could build it into your brain? This study suggests you can. And the benefits go beyond inner peace. You may actually reshape the very networks that feed anxiety and control.

So ask yourself: If your brain reflected your attitude to life... what would it show?

Grecucci, A., Ahmadi Ghomroudi, P., Monachesi, B., & Messina, I. (2024). The neural signature of inner peace: morphometric differences between high and low accepters. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*.

