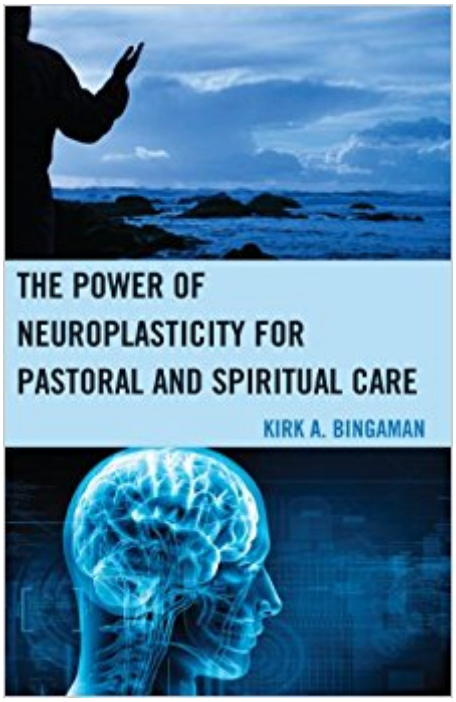
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The Power Of Neuroplasticity For Pastoral And Spiritual Care



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Synopsis

Studies in neuroscience demonstrate that a focus on mindfulness meditation and contemplative spiritual practice has the capacity to increase our non-anxious awareness and significantly lower our stress. Not only is this finding of immediate importance for pastoral counselors and psychotherapists, it will even necessitate a paradigm shift in the way that pastoral and spiritual practitioners approach the general care of souls. The starting point for such a paradigm shift is an acknowledgement of the built-in negativity bias of the brain, and how certain beliefs and theological views may inadvertently reinforce the bias to the detriment of individuals and faith communities. Once necessary for human survival, the ingrained bias can often be excessive for todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s world, resulting in negatively disproportionate assessments of life events and human relationships. To balance the neural predisposition toward negativity and anxious awareness, it is necessary for pastoral and spiritual caregivers, and those in their care, to cultivate a regular contemplative-meditational practice.The Power of Neuroplasticity for Pastoral and Spiritual Care focuses on the groundbreaking finding of contemporary neuroscienceÃ¢â ¬â •that the brain is built for change across the entire lifespan. It is designed to make the research accessible to and relevant for those engaged in the work of pastoral and spiritual care in order to help clients and congregants effect lasting and transformative changes in the mind and brain. Through the regular practice of contemplative prayer and meditation, we can literally calm the stress region of the brain in order to live less anxiously and experience more fully the peace and joy of the present moment. The introduction of mindfulness- and acceptance-based counseling approaches will provide pastoral and spiritual practitioners with an important therapeutic framework to situate their work, from which they can make more informed and effective interventions geared toward using the mind to change the brain.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In The Power of Neuroplasticity for Pastoral and Spiritual Care, not only JesusÃ¢â ¬â„¢ words in the Sermon on the Mount...but also religious and spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation are given multidimensional meaning and greater importance. The book is a welcome addition to pastoral and practical theology and theologyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s engagement with the sciences. It informs practical living, ways of caring, and clinical practice and invites a new approach to theological hermeneutics. Persons who are anxious or fearful, persons interested in religious and spiritual practices, and pastoral caregivers or professional counselors will find The Power of Neuroplasticity for Pastoral and Spiritual Care a stimulating, informative, and challenging conversation partner. (Pastoral Psychology)This is a fascinating and ambitious book that shows how contemporary neuroscience has valuable implications for the practice of pastoral and spiritual care. Bingaman has an ideal combination of intellectual breadth, clinical experience, and theological sensitivity. He presents a host of religiously and spiritually grounded methods as reliable agents of neuroplasticity, and makes a compelling case that people who put real time and effort into these practices will actually transform the way their brains work. (Kelly Bulkeley, Graduate Theological Union)The Power of Neuroplasticity for Pastoral and Spiritual Care is an accessible, immensely practical text that firmly grounds pastoral and spiritual care within the unfolding discoveries of contemporary neuroscience. Dr. Bingaman engages Christian theology, psychotherapeutic practice, and pastoral care, arguing persuasively that our evolved neural structures dispose us to fear and that mindfulness-based practices offer a powerful antidote for those caught up in persistent anxiety. The text will be a welcome resource for practitioners and care receivers alike, including those who are skeptical of neuroscience's applicability and those already convinced. (David A. Hogue, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary)

Kirk A. Bingaman is associate professor of pastoral care and counseling at Fordham University. He is a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) in New York and a fellow with the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC).

I am taking a class with Dr. Bingaman. He is a contemplative scholar and in this book scientist. Ultimately he is a Pastoral Care Provider and it is an awakening for those who mistakenly believe that science and faith are not from the same source.

I am reading this book because it is assigned for a class that I am taking at Fordham. I haven't finished it yet, but am intrigued by the topic which is that by meditation we can "rewire" our brains to be less negative. There is no age at which the process of neuroplasticity ends!

Kirk Bingaman's newest book, 'The Power of Neuroplasticity for Pastoral and Spiritual Care', is a gem for mental health practitioners who value the incorporation of faith in the counseling process, clergy members providing pastoral care or for anyone desiring to live life more closely to one's core values. In it, he cites research linking contemplative prayer and the practice of mindfulness to actual positive changes in the brain and then explains the therapeutic importance of these findings in the practice of pastoral counseling.Not only is it possible to cultivate the habit of living in the present moment, a miraculous feat in itself, but also to make desirable personal changes as a result of being kinder to oneself, learn to accept oneÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s whole selfÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •including flaws and strengths, and embrace the gift of 'being' instead of constantly feeling the need to act, react or control stressful situations. This practice, over time, can reduce anxieties and help us to learn to feel emotions more fully, even painful ones that are needed for personal growth.For Kirk, someone I am blessed to know, it is his own daily practice in contemplative prayer that makes it possible for him to share these findings experientially with clients in his counseling practice. He is an excellent, well-trained pastoral counselor who wants only the best for those in his care. This book, and the good news it reveals, make it an excellent read!

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