

Unlearning How to Ride Your Bicycle

I don't remember much about learning how to ride a bicycle. I remember something about training wheels and taking a few nasty falls after they came off. I do know that my father wasn't there to help me or witness it. He was a small town family doctor who routinely worked over a hundred hours a week.

Learning and Negative Emotions

I think that I must be traumatized by not having my father around when I accomplished this rite of passage. In fact, the longer I sit here thinking about it, the more upset I think I am getting. What do you think I should do?

Associations

One option would be to talk to someone about this childhood trauma. Do I have an unconscious stress response when I even just see a bicycle? Maybe that is why I never took up serious cycling. I don't know if I should talk to a psychologist about this experience or to a trainer to unlearn how to ride a bike. The latter would be more effective, I think. But I wonder how long it would take me to unlearn this skill? If it were possible, I am sure I would have a better life.

Pathways

Unfortunately, you can't unlearn how to ride a bicycle. The problem is you can't eliminate the neurological pathways associated with the experience. In fact, you can't eliminate any of the past experiences from your brain. Most of your lifetime is sitting there and any part of it can be triggered by a word, comment, or image. Not only can your pain pathways not be eliminated, but all of the experiences that are proximate to your pain pathways are bound tightly to them. The continued assault of pain only makes the pathway more intractable.

Reprogram

What are you going to do? Reprogram your pain pathways.

—Dr. David Hanscom