Shekar Krishnarao

Is six months post-stroke the end of rehabilitation? Challenging limited thinking to maximise potential

‘Optimising Physical Recovery When Back At Home’

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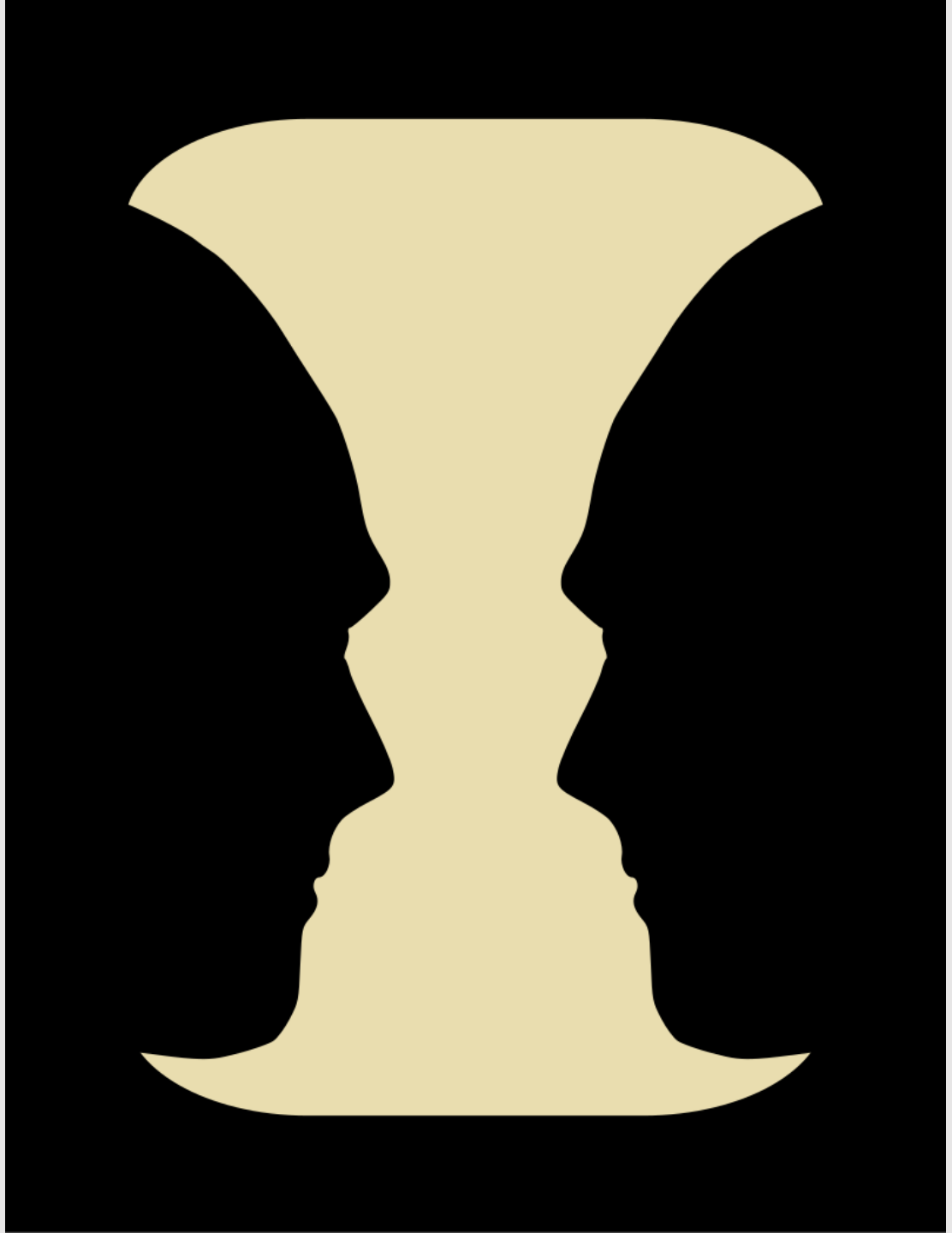
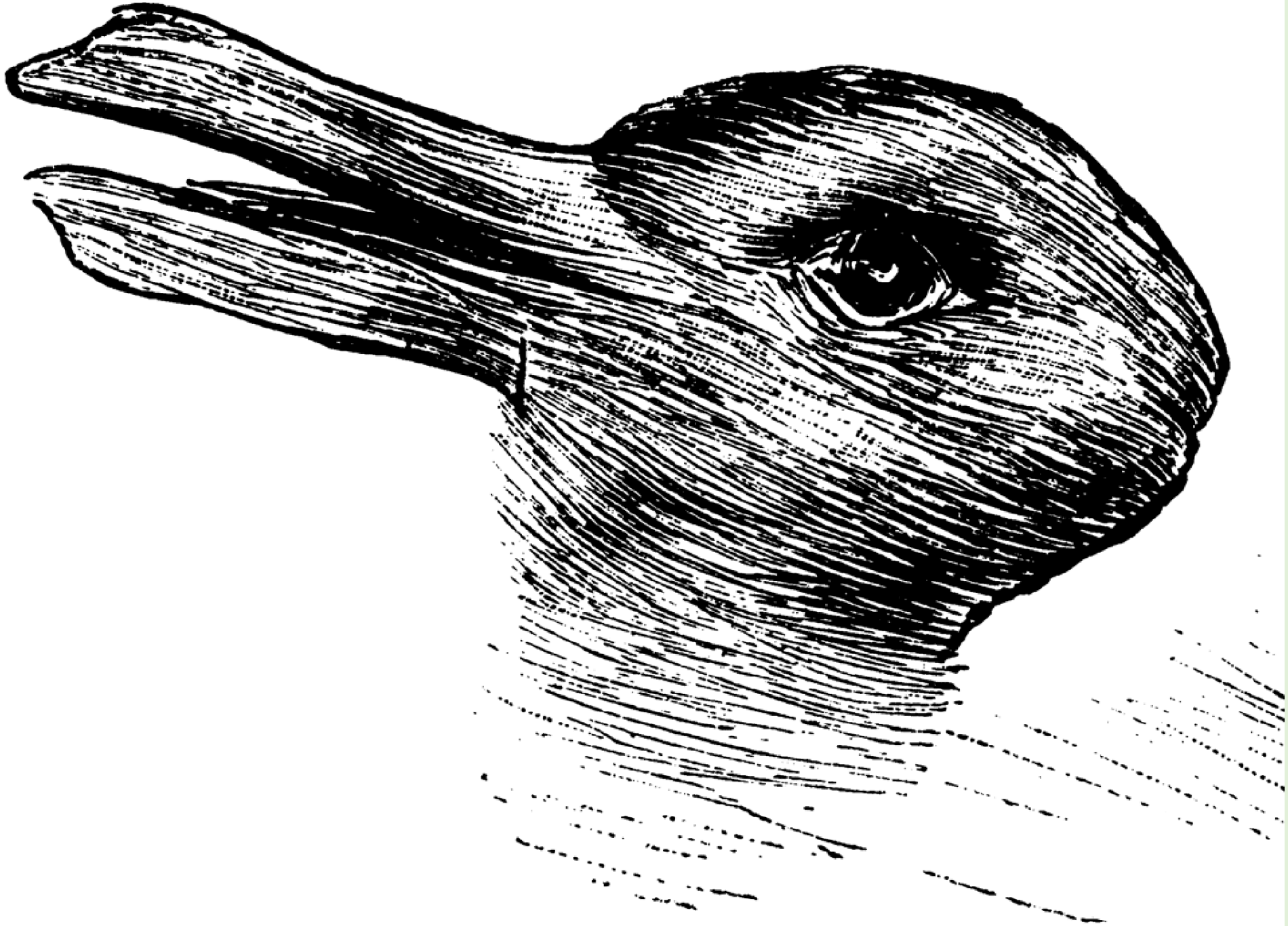
There Are No Conflicts Of Interest To Declare

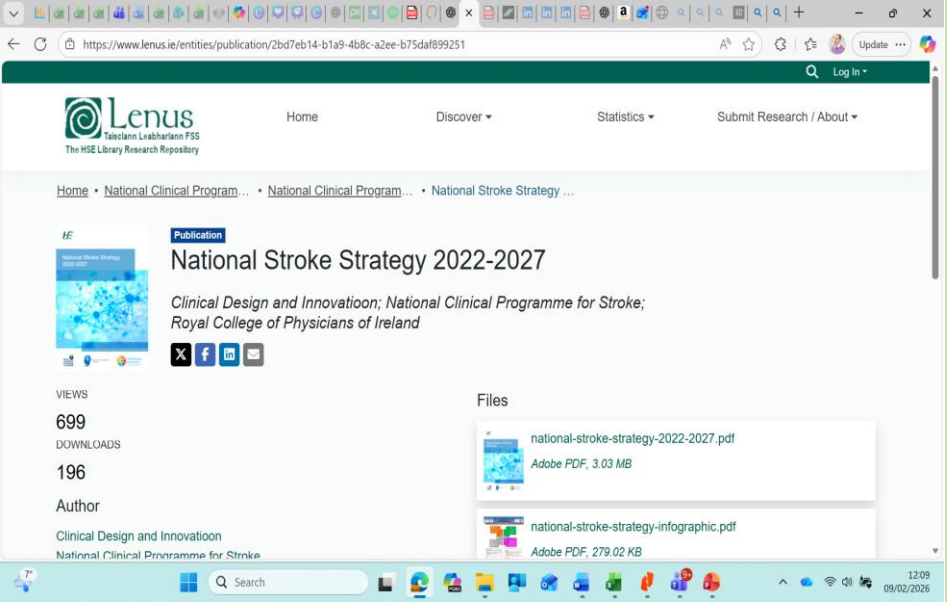




Do You Think That Your

'Brain Can Change Itself' At Any Stage

Of Your Life?

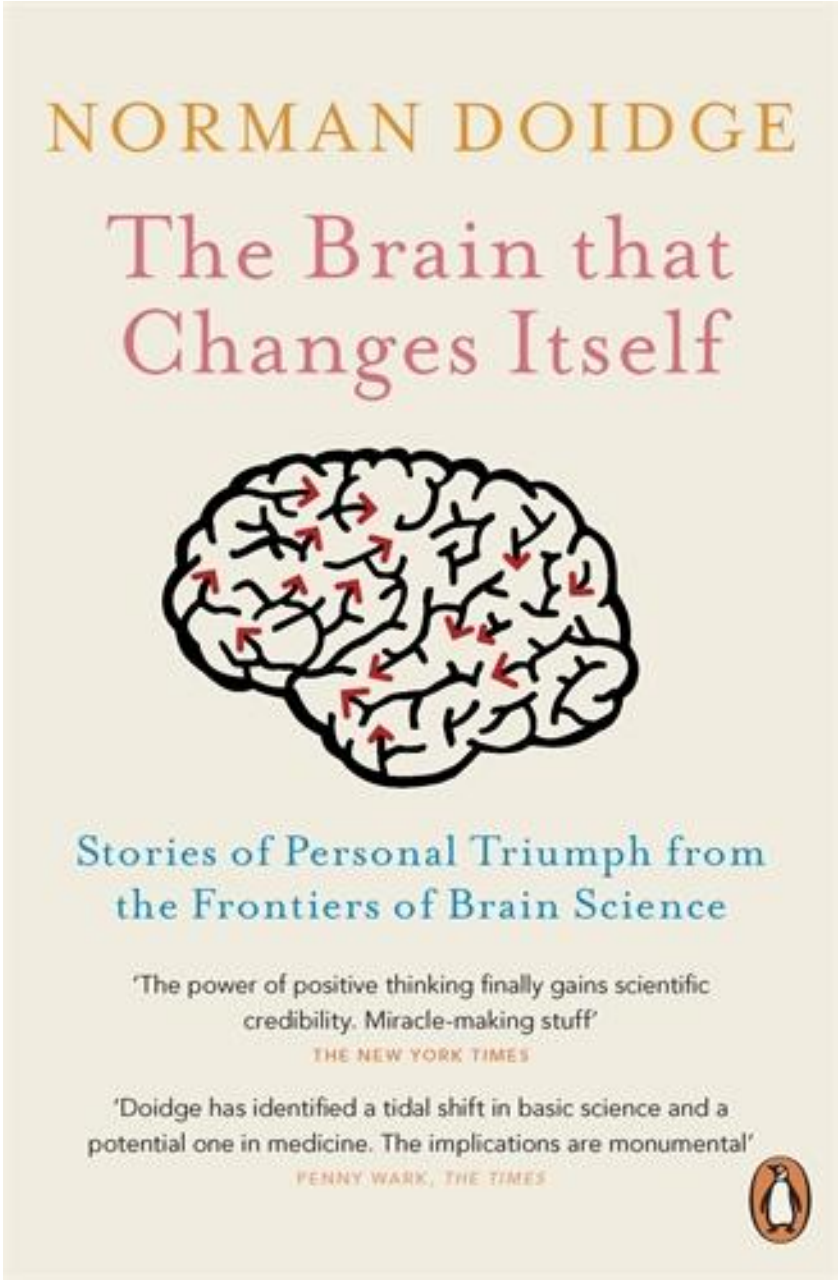


"Recovery doesn't stop at six months—only services do"

- National Stroke Strategy Ireland 2022–2027 explicitly recognises stroke as a long-term condition, requiring ongoing rehabilitation across the lifespan, not time-limited recovery.
- European Stroke Organisation (ESO) and multiple systematic reviews confirm that neuroplastic change occurs years after stroke, provided the brain is challenged with task-specific, meaningful practice.

The ‘Wobblers & Varifocal Glasses’ Story

The brain is highly adaptable and capable of ***REWIRING*** itself throughout life.



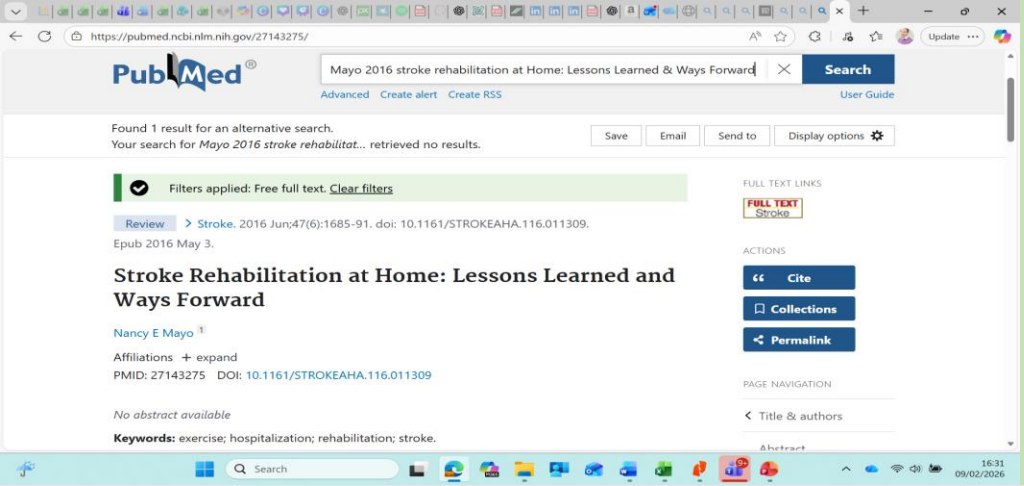
Lesson 1:
"Educate Stroke Survivors About Neuroplasticity"

Do You Think That

'Your Home' Can Be A

Powerful

Rehab Setting?



"Home isn't the absence of Rehab—it can be a most powerful setting"

- **Professor Nancy Mayo (**Mayo 2016) Stroke Rehabilitation at Home: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward.

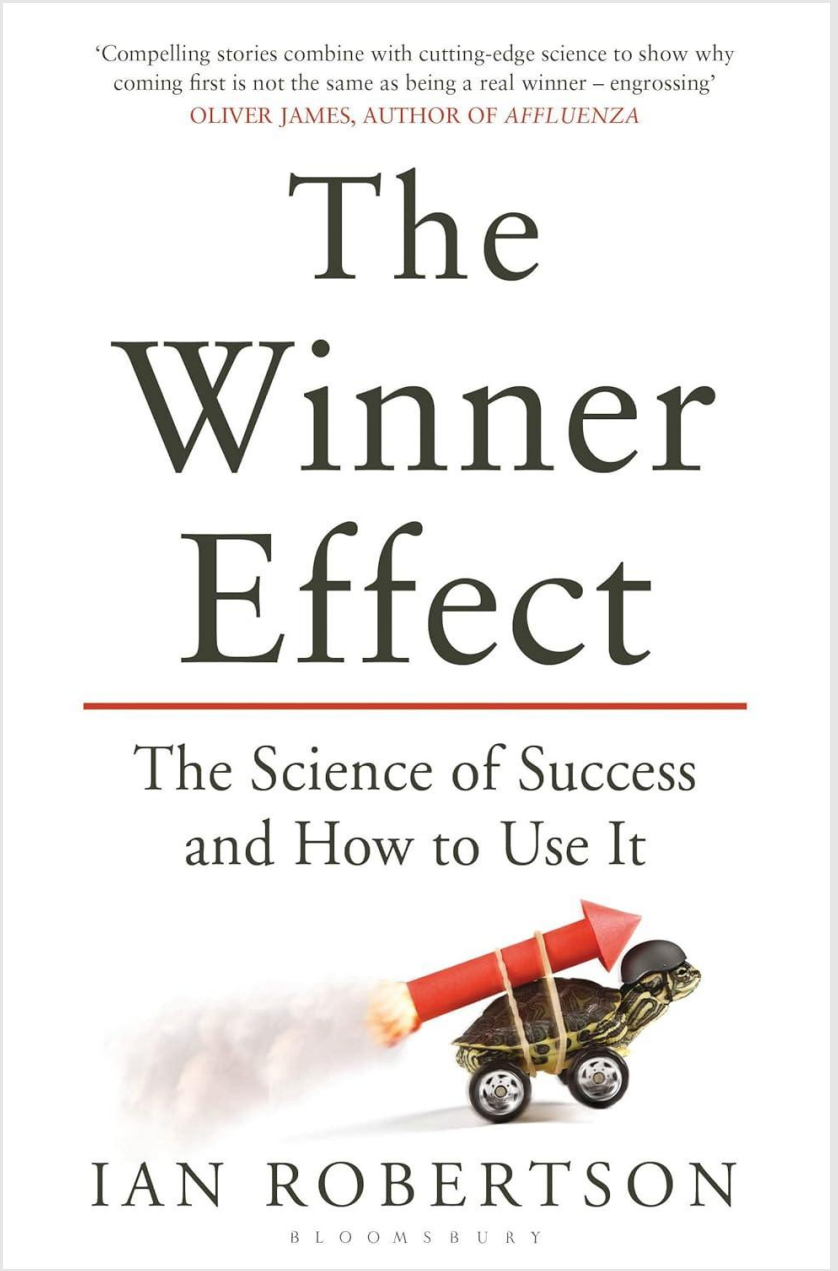
- The initial Professional guidance carried on successfully at home.

- Home benefits include;
  - Emotional-Cognitive Issues Recognised.
  - Increased Self-Efficacy
  - Active Involvement in Treatment.

The 'Testosterone' Story

- "In hospital, someone practices standing up from a plinth. At home, they practice standing up from the chair they actually use 20 times a day"

- "The brain learns what it practices - Home gives it relevance"

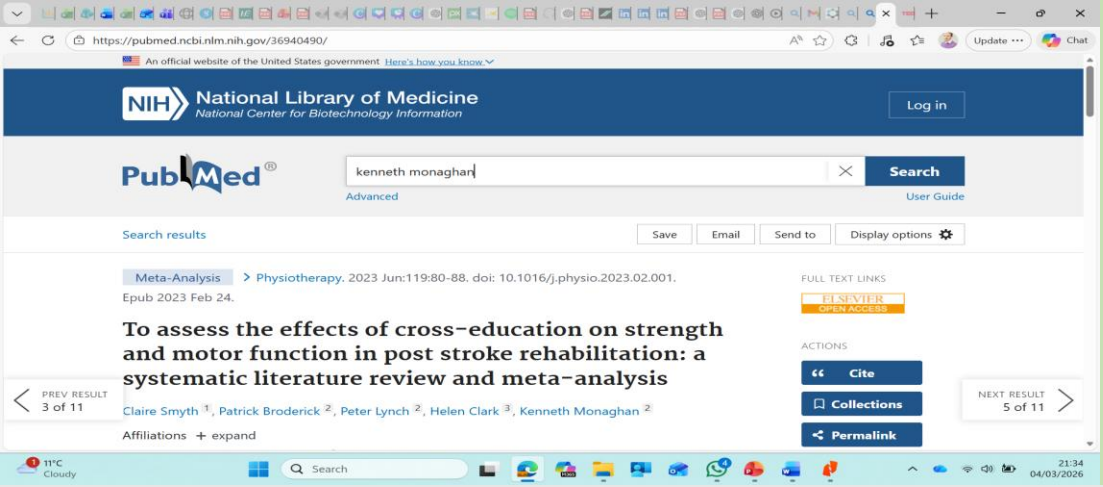


Lesson 2:
“Rehabilitation Doesn’t Need a Clinic – It Needs Meaning”

Do You Think That

'What You Believe' Can

Influence Your Health?



"Innovation doesn't have to be expensive— just accessible"

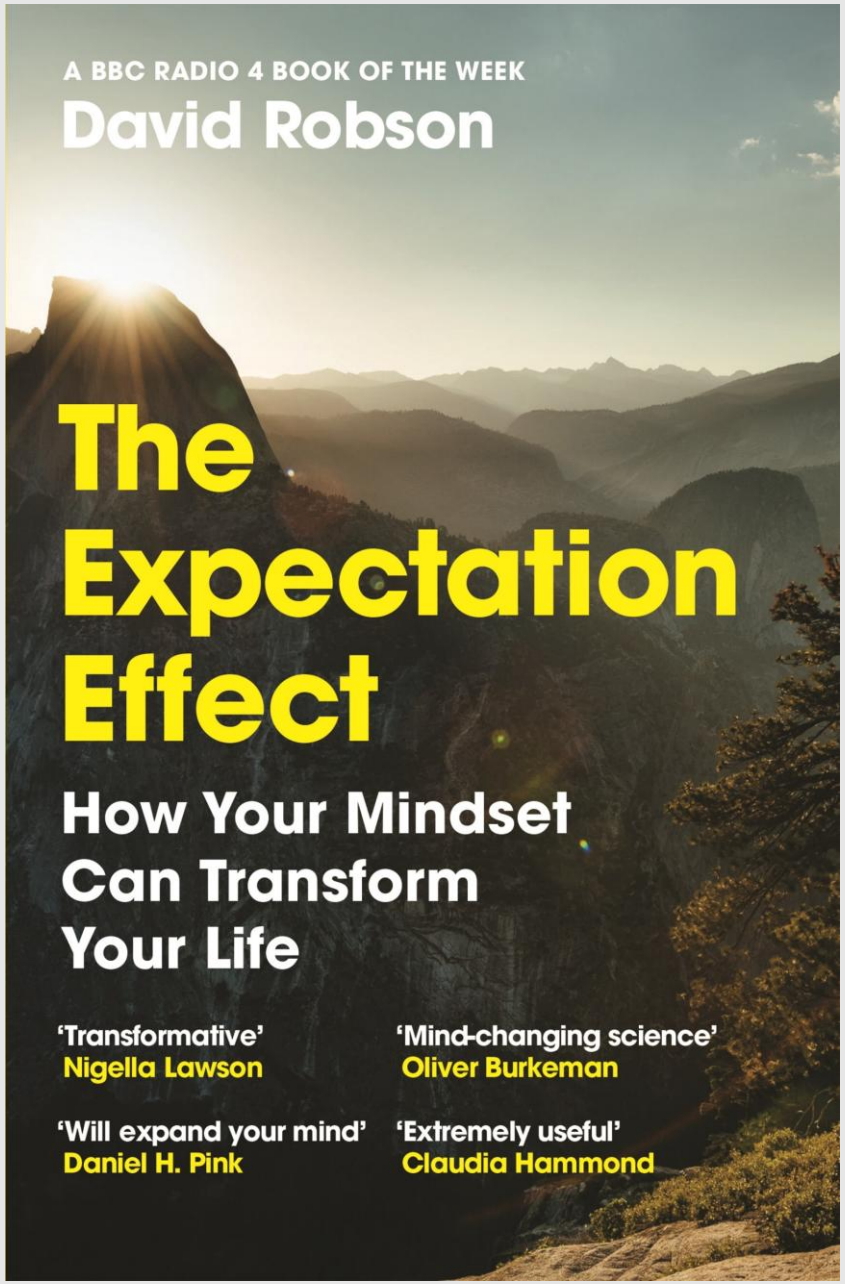
- UK & Irish Stroke Guidelines promote/emphasise person-centred care, self-management, and empowerment.

- Psychological research shows self-efficacy influences adherence, engagement, and outcomes (Zang et. al. 2023).

- Neurobiology: motivation, agency, and hope influence dopamine, BDNF, and learning-related neurochemicals, which support neuroplastic change (Bradley & Damiano 2019).

The ‘Milkshake Experiment’ Story

Our ***‘BELIEF SYSTEMS’*** influence our decision making!!



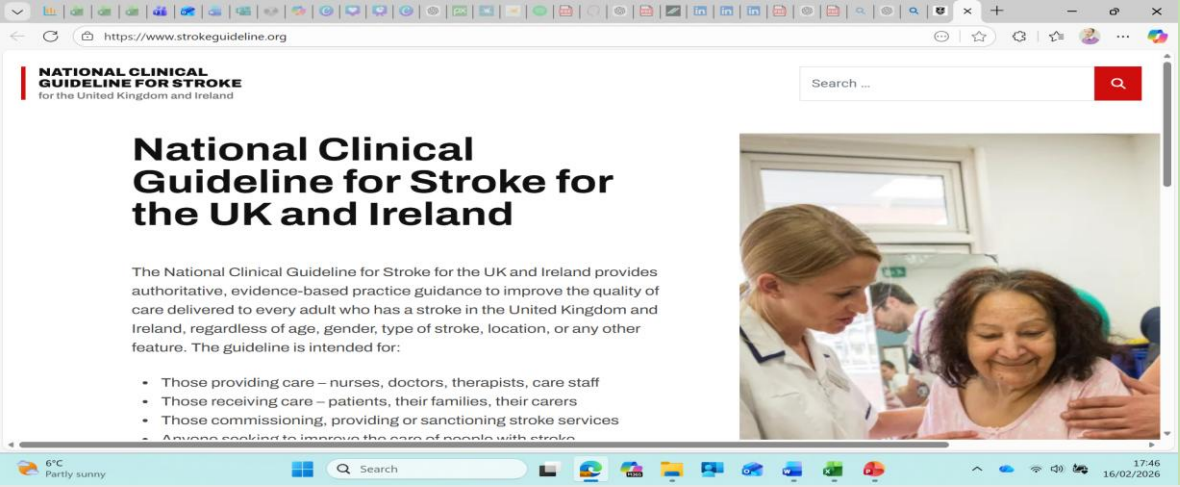
Lesson 3:
"When Belief Changes – Biology Follows."

Do You Think That

'Innovative Therapies'

Can Be Done At Home?

‘Mirror Strengthening Device’



"Belief Changes The Chemistry Of Recovery."

- Cross-Education of Strengthening (Smyth et al 2023)
- Neuropilates in Stroke at Home (Cronin et al 2023)
- Sensory Substitution in Neurology (Lynch & Monaghan 2021)
- Mirror Therapy & Cross-Education (Ehrensberger et al 2019)

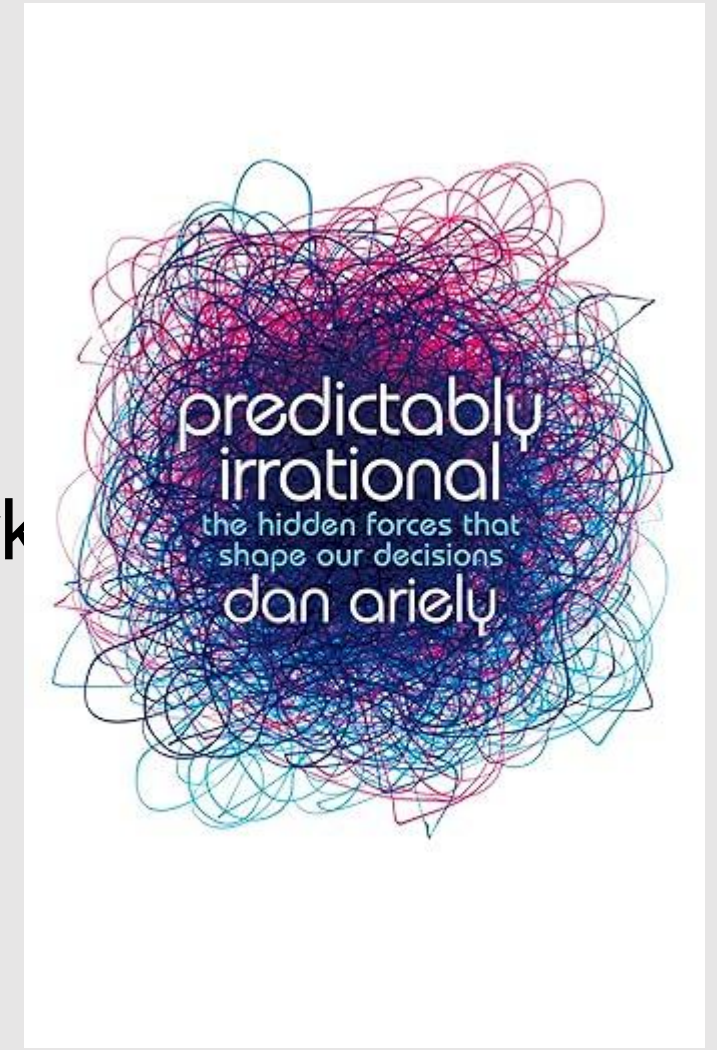
Lesson 4:

"Successful Therapy Does Not Need To Be Expensive

Do You Think ***'Praising'*** Other People's Work Can Influence Their Health?

Motivation: The ‘Lego’ Story

- **R**ecord peoples’ work.
- **E**ncourage people’s work.
- **A**cknowledge peoples’ work
- **P**raise peoples’ work.
- **REAP** = Twice the effort.



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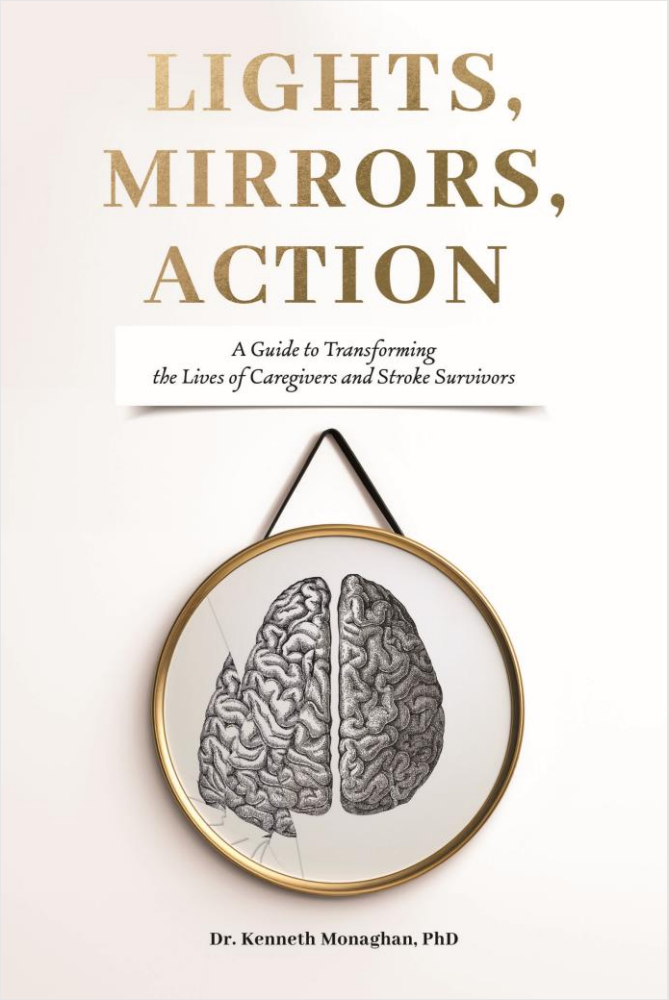
Lesson 5:

"Use A Daily Diary To Record The Effort Your Stroke Survivor Makes"

SPEECH: Take Home Advice

- **S**elf-belief Important.
- **P**raise & record ‘Hard Work’.
- **E**ducate ‘Neuroplasticity’.
- **E**nd ‘Nonsense’.
- **C**ost-Effective Therapy.
- **H**ome Is Powerful.



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