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## Lucid, personal account of re-training the brain

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THE WOMAN WHO CHANGED HER BRAIN. By Barbara Arrowsmith-Young. Free Press. 288 pages. \$26.

In “The Woman Who Changed Her Brain,” Barbara Arrowsmith-Young explores the fascinating idea of neuroplasticity, the brain’s ability to “remap” itself with the right stimulation.

In the past, it was thought that individuals with learning disabilities were destined to live their lives using the brain with which they were born. But now, thanks to neuroscience, the brain may be able to be adapted and essentially “changed” through intensely focused cognitive exercises.

This collection of accounts describes individuals with learning disabilities who overcame their difficulties through exercises focused to strengthen particular areas of the brain. The author, learning disabled until 26, was about to drop out of college when she read of Aleksandr Romanovich Luria’s work with Russian soldiers who had brain injuries.

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She recognized herself in a specific patient with whom Luria had worked. With hope sparked that she, too, may be able to strengthen her neurological weaknesses, based on this theory of neuroplasticity, she developed intellectual tasks that eventually led to her overcoming her disabilities and founding a school.

Readers of “The Woman Who Changed Her Brain” will find the author’s writing style lucid and her personal story inspiring. Students of personality, language, learning and teaching all will benefit from this exciting book about the miracle of the human brain.

## Reviewer Hayden D. Shook, an English as a Second Language teacher living in Charleston