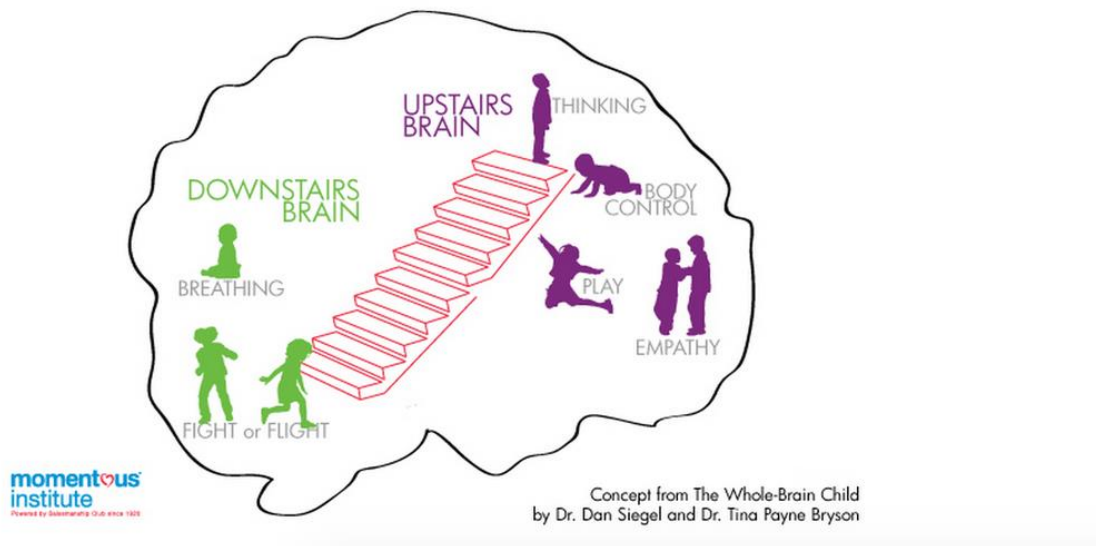


Picture a brain like a house. Downstairs is where important things live. Basic functions like breathing, strong emotions, and innate reactions to danger, like fight, flight or freeze. It's like the downstairs of a house, which is where we almost always find the basics—kitchen, living room, bathroom.

The upstairs brain is more complex. Thinking, imagining, planning – these things come from the upstairs brain. We use the upstairs brain to think critically, problem solve, and make good decisions. Important to note for those of us working with teens, the upstairs brain is not fully formed until our mid-20s!



## Flip the Lid (Hand Model of the Brain)

Make a **Fist** with your thumb tucked inside your fingers. This is a model of your brain.



**Thumb** = Midbrain (Stem & Limbic) = Emotional Brain. This is where emotions and memories are processed. This is where the fight, flight & freeze is triggered.

**Fingers** = Cerebral Cortex = Rational Brain. Houses our ability to think and reason.

**Fingernails** = Prefrontal Cortex = Problem-Solving

When something triggers us, we are prone to “**Flip our Lid**” which means the Prefrontal Cortex (Fingernails) have a very poor connection with the Midbrain (Thumb), and we’re not able to access the logical, problem-solving part of our brain. Our emotions are overriding our ability to think clearly.



-Dr. Dan Siegel