



Unity for Equality



Happy Mothers Day

May is Asian American

And Pacific Islander
Heritage Month

Celebrate

With Us

"8 Diverse Poets You should know"

May 2023 Issue



UNITY FOR EQUALITY

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This year, Mother's Day falls on May 14th, 2023. Ever since its official inception, the holiday falls on the second Sunday of May in America. But how did it get created?

Some say it started in Ancient Greece and Rome when citizens would celebrate festivals honoring the mother goddesses that watched over them. However, others might point to a more modern Christian influence with the tradition of kids giving flowers to their mothers on Mothering Sunday. Furthermore, others may emphasize the significance of American precursors like Mother's Friendship Day and Mother's Peace Day, organized by Ann Reeves Jarvis and Julia Ward Howe, respectively. They would push for maternal involvement in properly caring for children as well as promoting peace throughout the country.

The official inception of Mother's Day, however, has a concrete origin; it starts with Ann Reeve Jarvis' death in 1905. Her daughter, Anna Jarvis, then had the idea to create a day to honor the legacy and sacrifice of mothers. Jarvis would continue to advocate for Mother's Day to become a nationally recognized holiday, and in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson made it so. Officially the second Sunday of every May, Mother's Day quickly became a success,

especially among florists and card companies that capitalized on the national holiday. While Jarvis was against the commercialization of her holiday, she was unable to stop it despite trying to take her own creation down.

Nowadays, Mother's Day remains a popular holiday where children of all ages honor and celebrate their mothers and other maternal figures. While the commercialization of the holiday continues, some choose to emphasize the sentiment and true meaning of the holiday as well. So how might one do this?

Though Jarvis may not have been a fan of commercialization, there are many children who love to send gifts and many mothers who love to receive them. A thoughtful card, a bouquet of flowers, and a present are all great ways to show your appreciation for your mother. This is not an exhaustive list, either. If your mother has mentioned something that she has been wanting but has not yet bought herself, it may be a great opportunity to get it for her and show how much you care.

That being said, there is merit to Jarvis' intent for Mother's Day. Rather than putting importance on a gift that costs a lot, one can instead give a personal, handmade

gift to show their love as well. Cards can be handmade, flowers can be handpicked, and other gifts can be crafted. They do not have to be bought in order to have significant meaning. Many mothers will say that the price of the gift rarely matters. What is more important is being with family and spending time together. Thus, children should take time to show their appreciation for their mother's love and sacrifice in whatever way they can!

One interesting thing to note is that Mother's Day in America does not mean it is the exact same all over the world. While the essence of Mother's Day being a day to appreciate maternal figures remains relatively the same, it can differ in when and how it is celebrated. In France, Mother's Day is celebrated on the last Sunday of May or the first Sunday of June, and family medals are bestowed upon certain mothers who have raised many children. In Ethiopia, Mother's Day is celebrated around early autumn during Antrosht, a festival with plenty of food and stories while honoring motherhood.

Ultimately, whatever the festival or custom, Mother's Day is an opportunity for anyone to take the time and celebrate the maternal figure in their life. After all, it is a mother's sacrifice and love that have brought the world to where it is now. To all the mothers, Happy Mother's Day!





What started out as a week of cultural celebration in 1977 soon became a month in 1992 when Congress passed a law officially designating May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage (AAPI) Month. Also known as Asian Pacific American Heritage (APA) Month, AAPI Month celebrates all people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in America. The initial week was made sure to contain the May 7 and May 10 dates due to their historical significance. May 7th marks the date the first Japanese immigrants entered America in 1843 while May 10th was the day the transcontinental railroad—of whom the majority of the workers were Chinese immigrants—was completed in 1869. Now, the week is an entire month that seeks to spotlight Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander voices through cultural showcases and educational information.

According to the 2020 US Census, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders make up 6.2% of the entire US population.

This equates to roughly about 20.6 million people in the country. Though a lot of the AAPI population has a higher percentage of the population is concentrated in California, Hawaii, New Jersey, and New York, AAPI folk live all over the United States. Thus, when trying to celebrate and acknowledge AAPI month, remember that these stories and issues involve members of communities from every city and state in the country.



Recent years have seen an increase in the prominence of Asian stories and achievements. Asians in media have received more representation through films like Shang-Chi and Everything Everywhere All at Once. Kamala Harris was the first Asian American to become Vice President when she was elected in 2021. Of course, these are not the only achievements that we can celebrate or honor. There is so much more within the AAPI community that goes unseen or unheard at times. So, what can someone do to participate during AAPI month?



There are a variety of ways to broaden your knowledge and appreciation during this month. The AAPI government site serves as a great starting point to explore various projects,

initiatives, and words by members of the AAPI community. Currently, on the site, there are projects like Bravespace, a collection of music from female and non-binary AAPI artists; archives of photos from historical movements, and AAPI stories from the Veterans History Project. The site also offers links to other places people can navigate to in order to continue learning more about the AAPI experience.

Other ways to learn more include reading up on the struggles and impact of AAPI members in history. A lot of struggles in the past include events like the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), Hawaii's annexation in 1898, US v. Bhagat Singh Thind, and Japanese internment camps during WWII. Historical events like these serve to demonstrate that Asians and Pacific Islanders in history have been oppressed and discriminated against. However, these are struggles that have been overcome throughout the century, and the fight continues to this day.



While the celebration of AAPI stories has increased throughout the years, there is always more to be done when trying to spotlight the achievements and struggles of underserved minorities. All citizens that fall under the AAPI umbrella deserve to be seen and heard every day of the year. So, with May being AAPI month, start now and expand your knowledge and compassion while honoring the past and celebrating the present.





The temperament and individuality of culture can be best represented through poetry. Many writers of color invoke ethnic, societal, and political narratives. Here are eight contemporary poets who embrace the individual, artistic, and spiritual encounters centered on cultural diversity.

1. Warsan Shire

Though raised in London, Shire was Somali born in Kenya in 1988 and based most of her poems on the experiences of immigrants and refugees. Shire had visited an unoccupied Somali embassy in Rome, inspired by the linkage between Italy and Somalia and wrote her 2009 poem "Home," re-sounding the experiences of refugees from African regions such as Somalia and Congo. Later in 2014, Shire had been inspired by her uncle's past to write her poem, "Backwards," conveying the clash between the speaker's yearn for the past and disgust of the present with a dramatic flair.

2. Ocean Vuong

Born in Saigon, Vietnam in 1988 and raised in the U.S., Vuong's poems highlight the moral aspects of change, aspiration, and violent loss. His recent 2022 collection, *Time Is a Mother*, was written after his mother's death and sheds light on his mother's experience immigrating from Vietnam to the U.S. Vuong utilized imagery and metaphor to in- still the viewpoints of his mother and Vietnam refugees baring the struggles of trauma, grief, desertion, and war. Additional poems written by Vuong which incorporate these illuminating literary qualities are "Aubade with Burning City" (2014), "DetoNation" (2014), and "Essay on Craft" (2017).



3. Esther Belin

Belin is a Native American born in 1968 and grew up in Los Angeles, California. She fuses her indigenous side with American culture in her poems with the themes of racism, detachment, and substance abuse. One of her most influential poems, "Night Travel," published in 1999, depicted Belin's childhood struggle to embrace both her Native Indian heritage and her urban American identity. One line that may stick with the reader when reading this poem is the repetition of "I know the darkness of roads." This significantly refers to Belin's heritage and culture, which she cannot change nor refuse. Other inspirational works include "Blues-ing on the Brown Vibe," and "Bringing Hannah Home," also published in 1999, which spotlight the issues of marginalization and racism.

4. Solli Raphael

Raphael became the youngest rising poet at just 12-years-old after winning the 2017 national Australia Poetry Slam competition at the Sydney Opera House. He published his first poetry book a year later entitled *Limelight* addressing critical issues in his generation including themes such as activism and environmentalism. Solli's second and third books, *Spotlight* (2020) and *29 Things You Didn't Know About Me* (2022), center on social equality and traversing the impact of writing on social change.



5. Upile Chisala

Chisala was born in 1994 and raised in Zomba, Malawi. She published her first self-published poetry book, *SoftMagic*, in 2015. This collection includes Chisala's childhood experiences and the subjects of gender, spirituality, and blackness. Her other books, *Nectar* (2017) and *A Fire Like You* (2020), also reflect on these topics from a first-person point of view. In 2021, Chisala founded the *Khala Series*, an online mentorship writing program supporting the submission of unpublished poetry and prose. Later that same year, Chisala selected and collaborated with 100 poems and/or prose in a new anthology she titled, *Woven with Brown Thread*. This collection manifested a sense of community with other poets who came from diverse backgrounds, professions, and religious cultures.





6. Tishani Doshi

Doshi was born in 1975 in Madras, India. Though a freelance journalist, Doshi became a broadly acclaimed creative writer and poet after the initial publication of her poetry collection, *Countries of the Body* (2006), depicting a poetic perspective on the distinct movements of the body including the association between Western and Indian culture. Doshi's inspiration for writing this stemmed from her time dancing internationally with the Chandralekha group. Love, mourning, and injustice are several categories portrayed in this collection. Her most recent collection, *A God at the Door* (2021), delivers a historical, political, feminist-based, and rebellious journey on the individual mind, body, and soul.



7. Yosimar Reyes

Born in Guerrero Mexico in 1988, and raised in East San Jose, California, Reyes is an acclaimed activist and poet who tributes his poems to the themes of migration and sexuality. His two most notable poems, "TRE (My Revolutionary)" and "Pride," distills the power of individual voice and maintaining a complex identity in Western society. Reyes uniquely incorporates the Spanish language in certain stanzas of these poems to broaden his singular perspective.

8. Luba Yakimchuk

Yakinchuk is a Ukrainian poet, screenwriter, and journalist. She was born in Pervomaisk, Ukraine in 1985. Her poetry includes the literary elements of setting and theme to invoke the culture, language, and spirit of Ukraine. Her 2014 publication called *Apricots of Donbas* depicts the present upheaval of the Russian/Ukraine conflict. This collection is rich in sensibility, allowing the reader to identify with individualized attributes of trauma and anguish. Her other three singular poems, "Ashtray," "Mutual Friends," and "Asylum, a Dance," also exhibit her experiences of living in war-torn parts of Ukraine. She utilizes imagery and first-person point of view to maximize the ruination of daily life.



Covid's Effect on International Resources

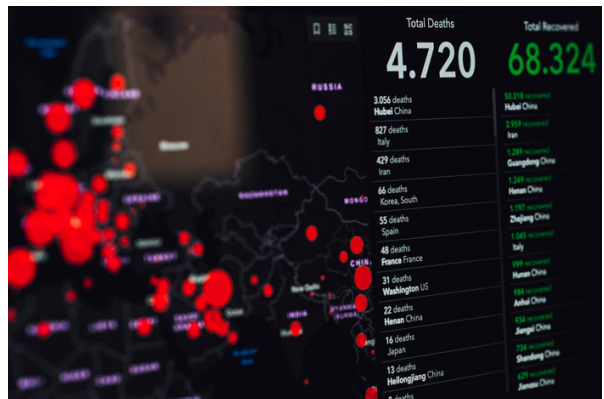
By Lucas Giordano

The arena of international relations is never more sensitive than in times of global crisis; it is in these periods that the true nature of leaders, organizations, and national behavior is exposed.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic was a 3-odd-year crisis that, along with galvanizing several social and cultural changes altered the geopolitical landscape in a number of significant ways.

The economic impact of COVID on international trade has been the most noticeable change in the international sphere. The pressure created by supply-chain shortages and production inefficiencies caused reverberations throughout the global economy, leading to a near-total trade collapse in 2020. This collapse was showcased by a roughly 20% decline in international trade and industrial production.

Dan Drezner, a professor of international politics at Tufts University, wrote that despite the economic hardship and supposition that a global pandemic ought to accentuate pre-existing global trends, everything will roughly remain the same. Drezner cites historical examples of pandemics being catalysts for significant historical change, such as disease contributing to the fall of Rome or smallpox wiping on Native Americans, making way for European colonization.



However, improvements in urban sanitation, living standards, and medical technology, Drezner argues, have largely diffused the ability of a pandemic to affect the chance of these magnitudes.

The proliferation of mRNA vaccines and the relatively low death toll of the virus (in relation to pandemics in the past) would support this hypothesis. Essentially, not enough people died for COVID to have the same worldwide ramifications as the pandemics of yore. While this notion may seem morose, it is ultimately a matter of macro trends involving shifts in the human population.



Steep increases or decreases in population have ramifications on the workforce, the military, and the cultural ethos of a society. In the absence of these large-scale shifts, which tend to alter the leverage and stake each nation brings to the international bargaining table, things on a geopolitical level remain relatively similar to pre-pandemic conditions.

Shifts in economic behavior caused by the pandemic include an increased emphasis on autarky or the economically self-sufficient state. When everyone realized how brittle many international supply chains were, as well as how heavily their economies relied on the efficacy of other nations' economies, they decided to shift economic policy in favor of domestic production. Examples of this are Joe Biden's recent "CHIP" bill, which allocates 280 billion dollars for United States microchip manufacturing.



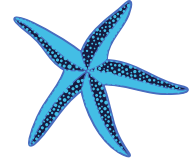
This new global trend in self-reliance has been exacerbated by another significant geopolitical development that is arguably more relevant in the discussion on shifts in the international relations landscape than COVID: Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Germany, for example, has recently delayed the foreclosure of three of its Nuclear power plants and reopened coal-fired plants as means of energy generation following the severance of the energy imports from Russia following the invasion. War in Ukraine has again stoked the embers of rivalry between the Western world and Russia, creating more international tension and political animosity than any component of the COVID-19 virus.



Many international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and World Trade Organization (WTO), remain intact and functional. No new borders have been drawn (yet) nor treaties signed. COVID was a global reminder of our susceptibility to nature as a global community and held a mirror to our interconnectedness. This trend of self-sufficiency could lead to economic isolationism down the line, or the impacts of COVID and the hardships endured therein may serve as motivation for knitting together international health protocols and medical resources.

Ultimately, the lasting ramifications of a major historical event are theoretical and opaque in the immediate wake of the event's occurrence. It will likely be a decade or longer before COVID's effects on the global political community are realized, recorded, analyzed, and understood.

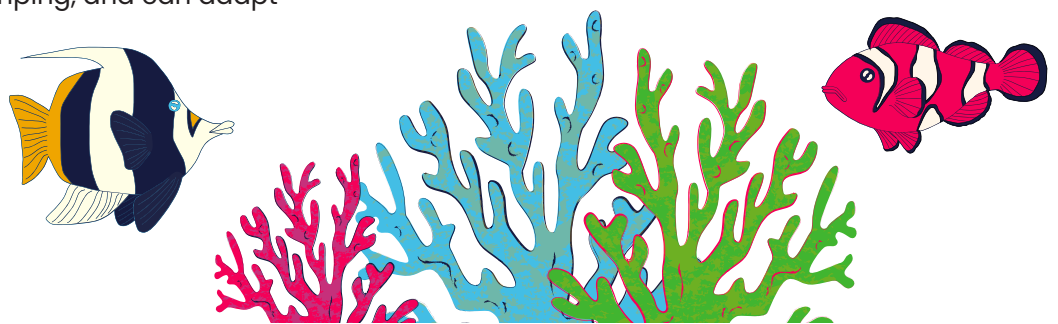




Marine life and ecosystems are endangered. Pollution from intensive farming causes runoff from animal waste to be carried in sewages and released into oceans, increasing the exposure of E. coli and harmful algal blooms. Overfishing imbalances fish populations and distorts the progression of reproduction and maturity. Additionally, increased carbon dioxide emissions result in changes to oceanic temperatures and loss of aquatic habitats. These problems are damaging to the environment and have catastrophic effects on the wildlife. However, not all hope is lost.

Many organizations around the world are trying to combat environmental damage and preserve susceptible ecosystems. According to experts from the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), mangroves occupy an approximated area of 15.2 million hectares (a metric unit of square measurement) in 123 countries globally. These ecosystems are important for restoration because of their capacity to store substantial quantities of carbon which improves water quality and fish health.

Other key habitats include oyster reefs, saltmarshes, coral reefs, kelp, megafauna, etc. to keep the world's oceans clean by diminishing erosion on shorelines and averting invasive species- which are often introduced unintentionally to open waters by human activities like aquarium dumping, and can adapt



and reproduce rapidly. One example of these invasive species is lionfish, which are ravening creatures and bear venomous dorsal fins to protect them from any of the Atlantic's natural predation. By protecting and growing healthy ecosystems, endangered species are given better odds to thrive in their surroundings.

While natural environmental changes do have an effect on the animals that live there, humans also play a role in affecting the livelihoods of endangered species. Human-induced activities such as wildlife trafficking and deforestation have led to shifts in the weather patterns, the runoff of harmful chemicals, and increased wildlife endangerment.

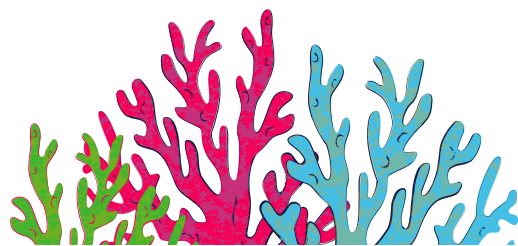
Here's what one can do to restore the habitats of endangered animals. The first is to dismiss the use of industrialized fertilizer on plants as excessive amounts may contribute to aquatic dead zones. Industrialized fertilizer causes rapid growth in plants which increases the amount of oxygen consumed and causes excess nitrogen to be released into waterways. The best alternative is to instead use more natural materials like grass clippings, weeds, food scraps, tree leaves, manure, etc.

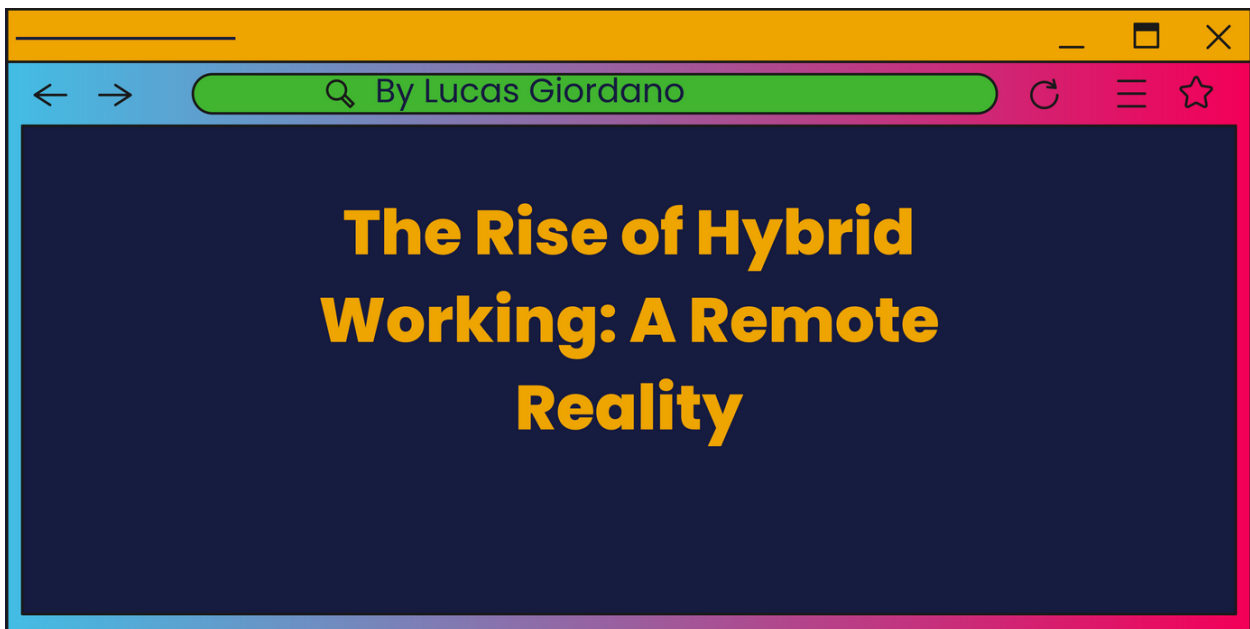
Another solution is to conserve water in parts of one's household. For instance, examine and replace any leaks in sinks and bathtub spouts. Even replacing older plumbing models such as toilets and shower heads with new ones is beneficial because these use less water. For instance, standard shower heads exert 2.5 gallons of water per minute, and older toilets use as much as 6 gallons per flush. As for the kitchen sink, it's best to stop pre-washing dishes because doing so can use 1 to 3 gallons of water per minute. Thus, personal water conservation efforts may maintain wetland habitats, save energy, and limit the risks of droughts.

Lastly is to get rid of unwanted tech by recycling them. Various electronic products such as cell phones, computers, printers, etc. are non-biodegradable, meaning they're incapable of breaking down by natural organisms. Shockingly, of the 40 million tons of tech waste, only 12.5% is recycled. These contain numerous poisonous metals like lead, mercury, and cadmium. Other than recycling, one can even upcycle their electronics into works of art and jewelry and sell them on sites such as Etsy and Techwears.



If efforts to revive and maintain these ecosystems continue, researchers say that marine populations could be rehabilitated by 2050. Though large-scale corporations do contribute to environmental damages, it does not mean an individual's efforts goes unnoticed. All preservation efforts, not matter how small, are significant for reducing habitat destruction and protecting the world's endangered species.





As I sit in the comfort of my own home drafting this article, it's difficult to contest the convenience of the hybrid workspace. The widespread application of the remote work method was created a few years ago as a provisional solution to the COVID-19 pandemic, which as we know, made in-person work a health risk. However, with the gradual recession of threat posed by COVID due to widespread vaccination and the implementation of pandemic procedures, certain social alterations are not similarly receding. Remote work was perhaps the inevitable destination of the professional world, and the pandemic served to expedite its implementation by a decade or so. Workers and companies across the United States, particularly in information-based fields, are seeing the benefits of working remotely, or at least under a hybrid schedule that has them in the office incrementally.

Andy Jassy, the CEO of Amazon, recently issued a minimum 3- day return to work order in February of this year, sparking controversy within the corporate giant's employee network. Jassy argues that in-person work promotes positive work culture, makes learning new concepts and designing models easier, and enhances individuals' ability to collaborate. Furthermore, he sees in-person work as essential to the development of positive team rapport and a galvanizing force of economic development in the regions where Amazon offices are located. While many of these observations seem reasonable, they are not necessarily rooted in sociological or psychological data, being more the conjecture of a speculative CEO.



Furthermore, remote work has acted as a chance for the rising generation of workers to get jobs at reputable companies with headquarters in major cities without incurring the financial costs of living in said cities. With the state of the housing market and inflation in the United States, the difference between in-office and working from home can be the difference between financial stability and instability.

On top of this, working from home *has not been shown to impact worker efficacy.*

A study conducted by Owl Labs in 2022 found that 67% of people feel more productive when working from home, and 66% of people would immediately begin searching for a new job if their existing employment demanded they return to the office.



A potential increase to general productivity is not the only advancement of a hybrid work structure; individuals working from home are more inclined to focus on their mental and physical health. A study from Ergotron found that 75% of respondents said they moved more frequently when working remotely, and 66% found it easier and more essential to prioritize work-life balance.



On top of the aforementioned benefits of remote-work, perhaps the most pertinent takeaway from this trend in the professional world is the prioritization of the worker over the corporation, particularly when productivity is not being sacrificed for worker convenience. An increase in mental health and physical health among a workforce should serve only to increase their productivity and general amicability with their employer, and should thus remain a priority as companies continue to legislate and explore this unprecedented issue.



Certain jobs, many of which are blue-collar, are not able to be done remotely. Work requiring physical labor will, of course, still be physical in nature. It is imperative while certain companies begin to recall their employees to be in the office full-time that these recalls are being done thoughtfully, not only out of a justifiable necessity to increase productivity but with the health and happiness of their employees in mind.



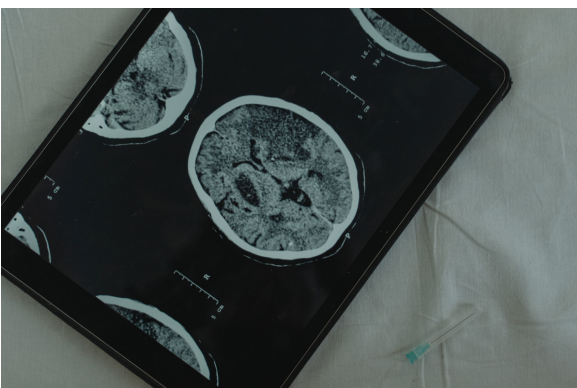
If at First You Don't Succeed: The Wonders of Neuroplasticity

By Jason Lee

Babies go from babbling random noises to being able to form words at a young age.

Soon, they're able to speak one or more languages fluently. Not only that, young kids seem to be able to pick up sports, learn new things in class, and navigate the world extremely fast. On the flip side, adults trying to learn a new language or learn about the latest trend may find themselves stuck in their attempts. Progress can be slow or frustratingly come to a complete halt. However, this frustration does not have to last forever. Let's talk about something scientists call neuroplasticity.

Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to rewire its own connections and essentially adapt to what is at hand. This doesn't mean your brain will instantly make you an expert at something; however, it does help to explain how we learn and grow in all stages of life.



For children, neuroplasticity is the reason why they are able to pick up information so quickly. Their brains are constantly in a state of development, allowing them to form neural pathways that are more specific to the lifestyle and environment they are exposed to. You may have heard a common comparison saying that kids' brains are like sponges. This comparison does have some merit! Since their brains have yet to form these connections over decades of time, new information is crucial to the brain and its development. This is why many people suggest learning skills and languages the younger you are.

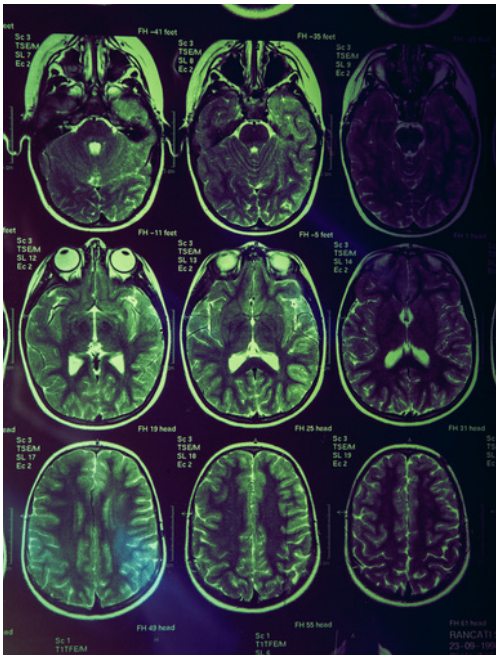
However, this doesn't mean the end of the world just because you are an adult. Being older doesn't mean your brain stops learning. Though neuroplasticity and the brain's potential may be more noticeable when it comes to childhood development, it still exists all throughout one's life.

Adults may experience more difficulty in picking up new skills or languages because the older one gets, the more background experience one has to push against in order to reshape their brain. For example, a 40 year-old adult who has only spoken English all their life might find it difficult to learn Spanish as opposed to a 10 year-old child. The adult has relied on English for way longer than the child and habitually formed a deep understanding of the English syntax. Thus, learning Spanish for them also involved rewiring neural pathways that were built upon 40 years of English.

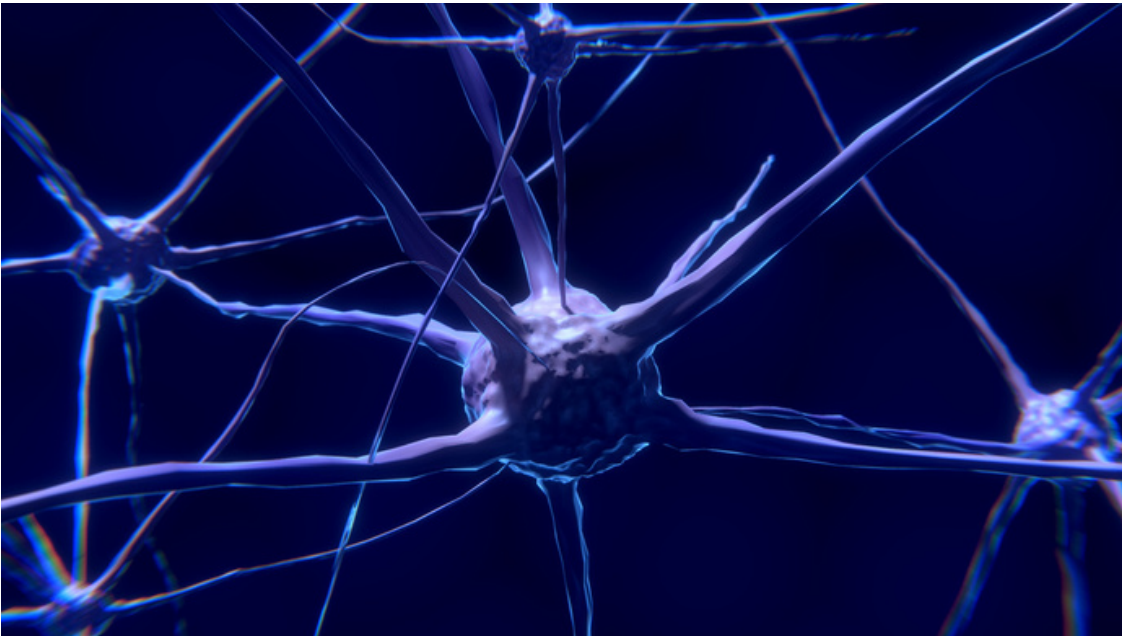


Though the example was an extreme simplification of neuroplasticity, it does help explain why adults may have a harder time trying to learn something new. Still, it shouldn't be discouraging at all. The fact is, neural rewiring is always happening, and one can take advantage of neuroplasticity at any time!

Psychologist Megan Hall says that creating neuroplastic change can be done by taking into account five things. The first is to make sure that what you want to learn is challenging and new. If the action is something you are already accustomed to, you're not promoting the creation of new neural pathways. Second, intention matters. Think about why you are trying to change and why it is important. The third is paying specific attention to the habit you are trying to build. Having a plan and following the steps will help to promote your inclination toward doing the task. Fourthly, repetition matters as well. Actions performed more often become habitual. Likewise, when you stop doing something, it becomes more likely that you don't do it again. Finally, remember that change takes time. It is not instant, but gradual progress is still making the most of neuroplasticity. Try to enjoy the process as you go rather than focus on a specific end goal. Eventually, the new habit or new skill will present itself as something you already do. After all, learning a language as a kid wasn't instantaneous. It involved constantly being in an environment that promoted the use of that language, and slowly accumulating the knowledge over the years.



The human brain is a marvel. It is capable of doing incredible things and takes us to places we may never have dreamed of. You may come to a point in your life where you feel stuck in your job, with a hobby, etc. If you ever feel down, remember that change is always achievable. Our brains are quite literally wired to rewire themselves in order to allow us to thrive in our shifting environment.



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