

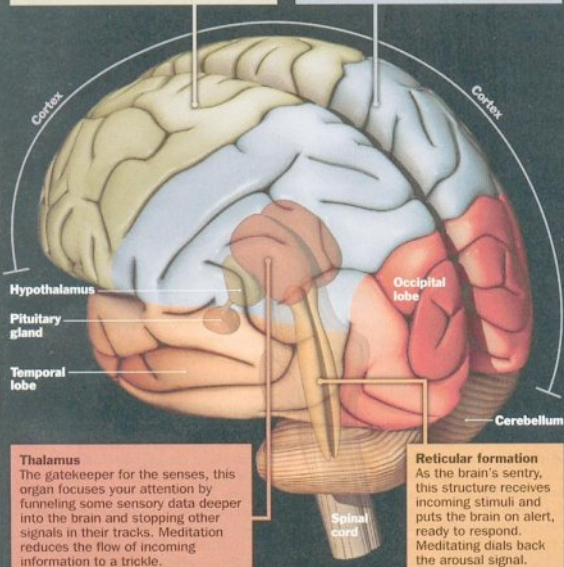
Inside the Meditating Brain

Frontal lobe

This is the most highly evolved part of the brain, responsible for reasoning, planning, emotions and self-conscious awareness. During meditation, the frontal cortex tends to go offline.

Parietal lobe

This part of the brain processes sensory information about the surrounding world, orienting you in time and space. During meditation, activity in the parietal lobe slows down.



Thalamus

The gatekeeper for the senses, this organ focuses your attention by funneling some sensory data deeper into the brain and stopping other signals in their tracks. Meditation reduces the flow of incoming information to a trickle.

Reticular formation

As the brain's sentry, this structure receives incoming stimuli and puts the brain on alert, ready to respond. Meditating dials back the arousal signal.

Source: Dr. Gregg Jacobs, Harvard Medical School, author of *The Ancestral Mind*. TIME Graphic by Joe Lertola, text by Alice Park