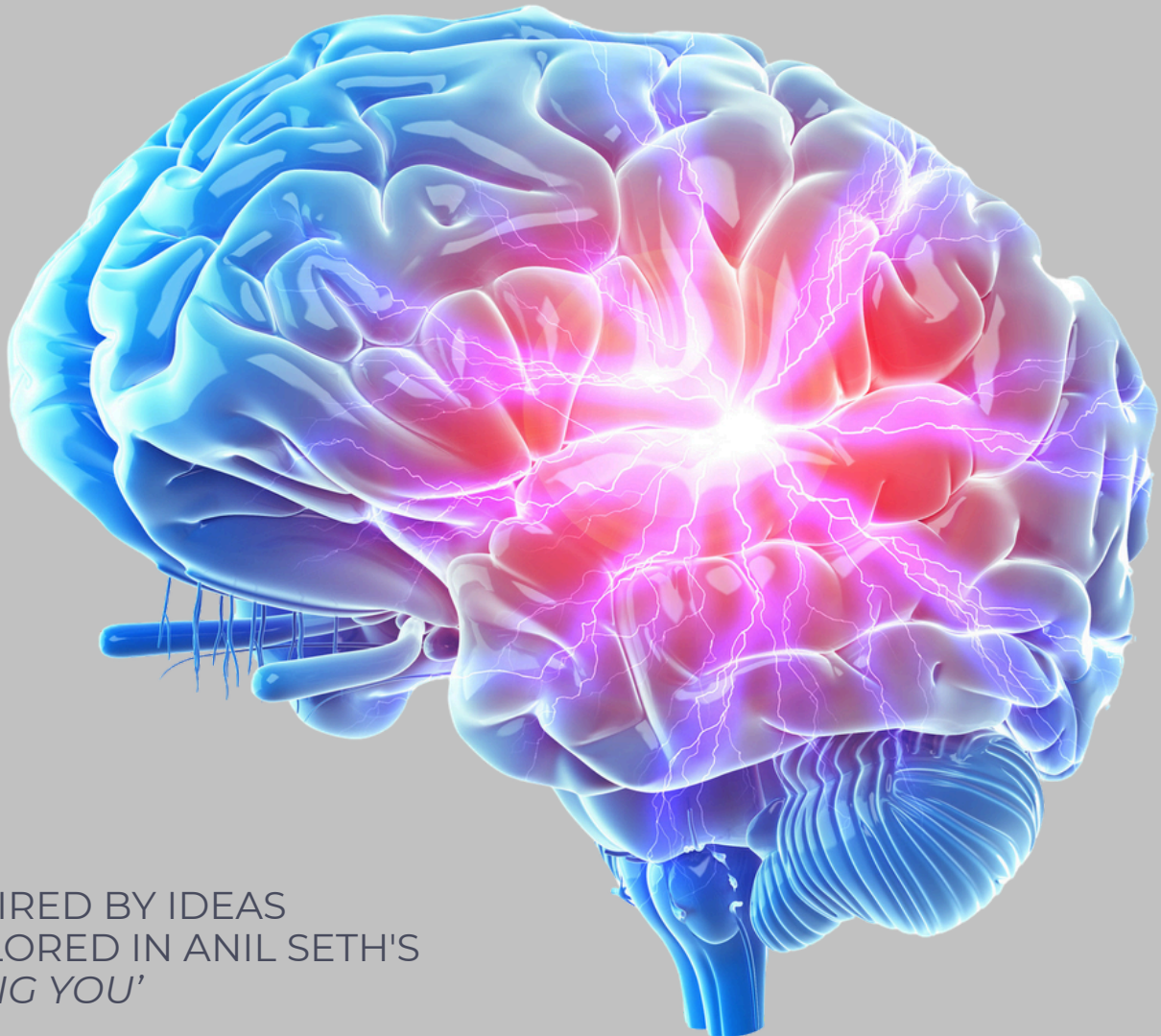


YOUR BRAIN'S VERSION OF *Reality*

*5 SIMPLE EXPERIMENTS THAT REVEAL WHAT YOUR BRAIN IS
DOING BEHIND THE SCENES*



INSPIRED BY IDEAS
EXPLORED IN ANIL SETH'S
'BEING YOU'

CAN YOU FEEL YOUR CLOTHES?

TRY THIS

Don't move.

Notice where your clothing is touching your body right now.

Your socks. Waistband. Sleeves. Maybe your collar or watch.

Could you feel all of that 10 seconds ago?

WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

Those sensations were already there, you just weren't paying attention to them.

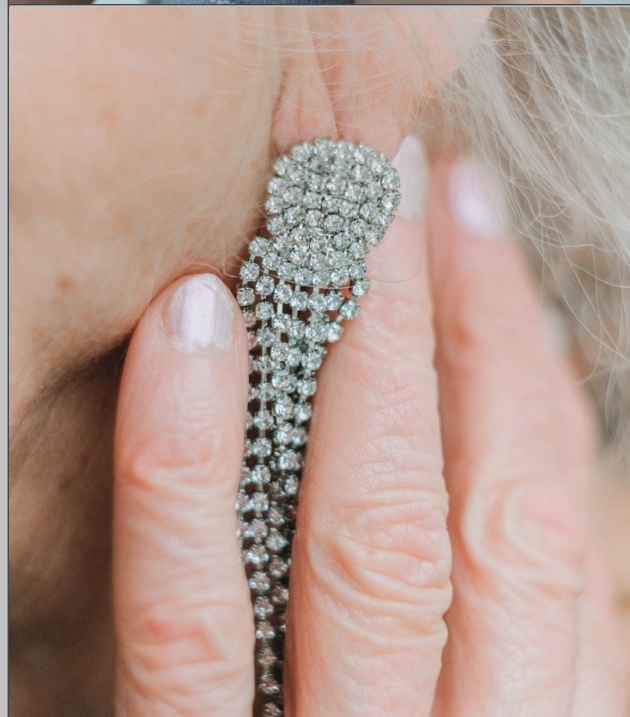
WHAT'S GOING ON?

Your brain receives far more sensory information than you could consciously notice at once.

Familiar, unimportant sensations can fade into the background until you deliberately focus on them.

THE TAKEAWAY

*What you notice is only part of
what your senses are
detecting.*



DID YOU SPOT IT?

TRY THIS

**PARIS IN THE
THE SPRING**

***READ IT ONCE, QUICKLY. DID ANYTHING
LOOK WRONG?***

WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

Did you spot the extra THE?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Context and expectation help your brain make sense of what it sees. Because you expect the familiar phrase “Paris in the spring”, the repetition can be surprisingly easy to miss.

THE TAKEAWAY

*Sometimes expectation influences
what we consciously notice.*



WHAT CAN YOU HEAR?

TRY THIS

Stop for **10 seconds** and *listen*.

Can you identify five separate sounds around you?



WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

How many were already there before you started listening for them?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Your environment is full of sensory information. Attention helps determine which parts become prominent in your conscious experience and which stay in the background.

Nothing around you necessarily changed.

Your attention did.



THE TAKEAWAY

Changing your attention can change your experience.



CAN YOU FIND YOUR HEARTBEAT?

TRY THIS

Without touching your pulse, sit quietly and see whether you can notice your heartbeat.

WHERE DO YOU FEEL IT?

Or perhaps you can't feel it at all, that's okay too.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

This is an example of interoception: sensing and interpreting signals from inside your body.

Your brain continually receives information relating to things like your heartbeat, breathing, temperature and digestion, even though you're not consciously aware of all of it.



THE TAKEAWAY

Your senses don't only point outwards.



DID YOUR PHONE JUST VIBRATE?

TRY THIS

Think about the last time you were waiting for an important message.

Have you ever reached for your phone because you were sure it vibrated... only to discover nothing was there?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Expectation can influence perception.

One of the ideas Seth explores in 'Being You' is that the brain uses prior knowledge and expectations to generate predictions about sensory information, then updates those predictions using incoming signals.

Usually this works brilliantly. Occasionally, expectation gets ahead of the evidence.



THE TAKEAWAY

What you expect can influence what you think you experienced.



SO, WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

Across these five experiments, your surroundings and body were giving your brain information all along.

But what you consciously experienced depended partly on things like:

ATTENTION • CONTEXT • EXPECTATION • INTERNAL SIGNALS • PREDICTION

That's one of the fascinating ideas explored in *Being You*: perception isn't simply a perfect copy of what's "out there".

Your brain is actively involved in making sense of it.

**ONE FINAL
EXPERIMENT...**



Take a moment to look around you.

What can you notice now that you weren't consciously aware of 30 seconds ago?

And if all of that was there without you noticing it... what else might your brain be quietly filtering, interpreting or predicting right now?

