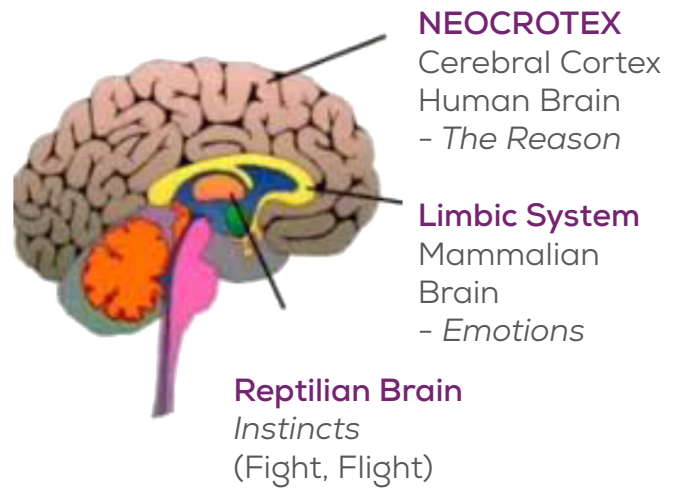


## 3 Triune Brain

The Triune Brain theory proposed by Paul MacLean describes the brain as evolutionarily made up of three parts.

- **OUR REPTILIAN BRAIN**, which is made up of the cerebellum and brain stem, is the evolutionary oldest part, that which we have in common with reptiles. It is our instincts our, 'autopilot' and is responsible for our fight, flight and freeze survival responses to threat. Amongst other things, it controls our body temperature, breathing, heart rate and balance, those autonomic functions which we have no conscious control over.
- **OUR MAMMALIAN BRAIN** is our limbic system or emotional brain and includes the amygdala and hippocampus. It is responsible for our emotions, habits and memories and helps us make decisions.
- **OUR HUMAN BRAIN** is the neocortex, our smart brain responsible for consciousness and cognition, including high order activities such as language, abstract thought, imagination and creativity. The neocortex is responsible for reasoning and rationalising.



### The hand model of the Triune Brain

#### 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 Siegal