

## ABOUT THE BOOK

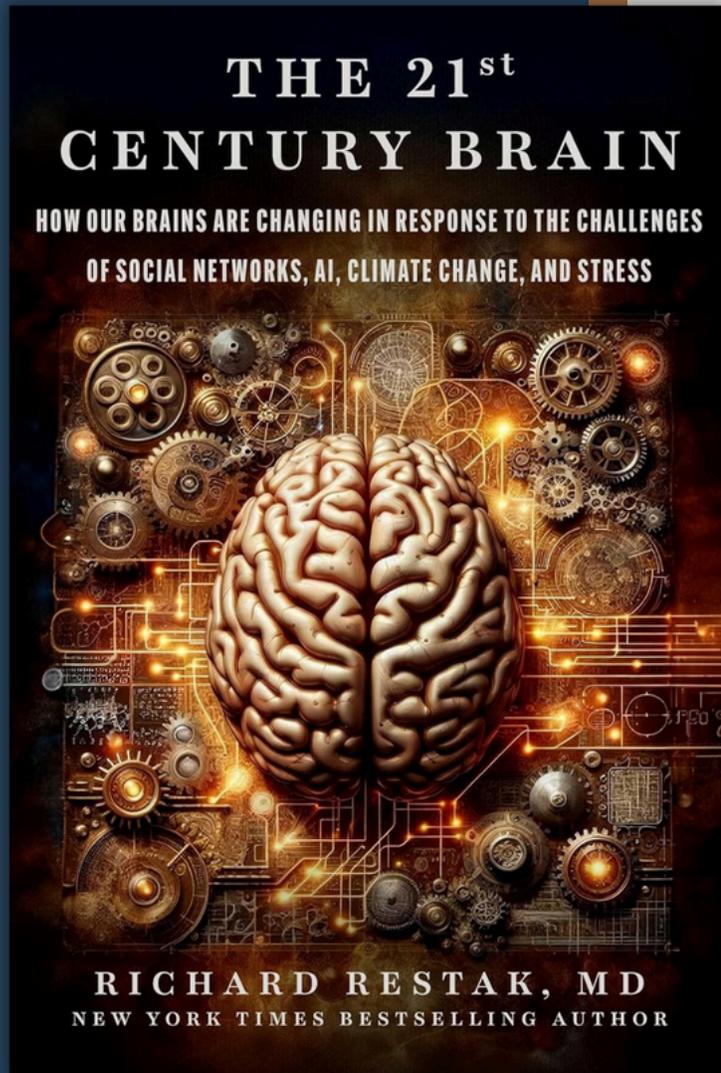
### The 21st Century Brain

Written by one of today's most trusted authorities on the brain, **The 21st Century Brain** by Richard Restak, MD is both a wake-up call and a roadmap for safeguarding our most vital organ in an age of unprecedented change.

Restak reveals how modern forces—from social media and artificial intelligence to climate change, wildfire smoke, and nonstop digital stress—are permanently altering brain function and even brain structure.

He explains why anxiety now feels “normal,” why images no longer guarantee truth, and how environmental hazards are silently eroding cognitive health and placing at risk the very core of our creative intelligence – the brain.

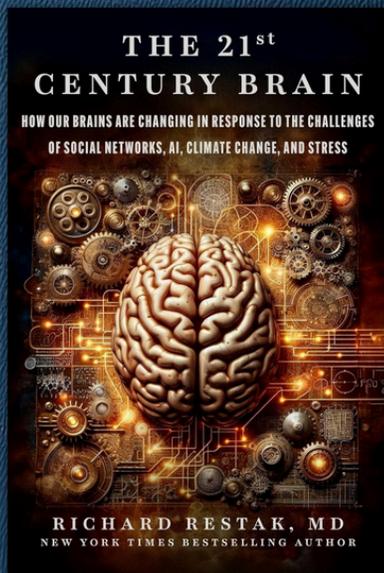
Restak combines science with clarity to show that the dangers are real.



### ADVANCE PRAISE

*“Fascinating, frightening, and right on time—with deft intelligence Dr. Richard Restak warns that our brains and our thinking are being attacked by artificial intelligence, COVID, the all-surrounding internet, global warming, and more in a brave new world of hyperobjects, connectomes, and VUCA—volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. With his gift of clarity, Restak is the ideal author to show us what we’re facing. He may not make us happier but he makes us smarter.”*

—HENRY ALLEN,  
winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism



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# The Cognitive Crisis

## WARNING: Protect the 21st Century Brain

Dr. Richard Restak, author of 25 books including three New York Times bestsellers, has spent his career translating the mysteries of the human brain into insights we can all use.

His newest book, **The 21st Century Brain**, examines how modern life is changing our minds in ways never seen before in human history.

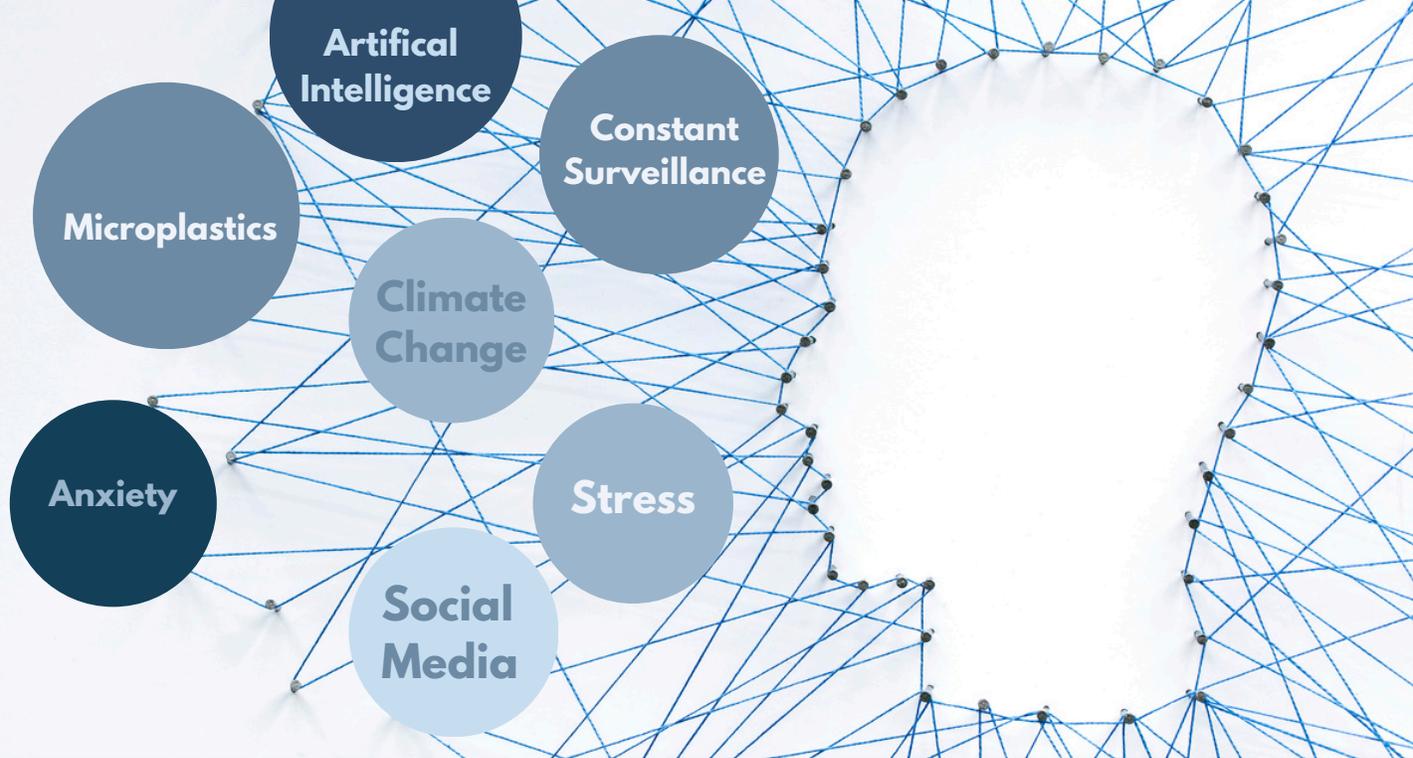
From artificial intelligence to climate change, from the nonstop stress of 24/7 connectivity to the way images have displaced words in communication, Restak shows how external forces are reshaping not just our behavior but our neural structures. Without action, today's rising anxiety, fading memory, and unstable moods may be only the beginning of a deeper cognitive crisis.

Yet Restak's message is not only a warning—it's a call to action. He believes that when people understand how their brains are at risk, they can also become innovators, finding solutions to safeguard cognitive health and chart a healthier course forward.

Beyond his books, Restak has lectured at NASA, the Smithsonian, and the Library of Congress, and his media appearances range from The Today Show to NPR.

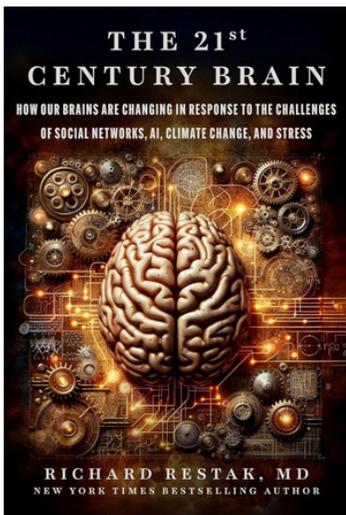
Known for his clarity, Dr. Restak makes complex science accessible.

**The 21st Century Brain** is more than a book—it is a wake-up call. Pulitzer Prize-winning critic Henry Allen praised the work as “fascinating, frightening, and right on time.” For anyone who wants to stay sharp, adaptable, and prepared for the challenges ahead, reading it isn't optional. It's essential.



## Seeing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges Through the Lens of the Brain

Some of today's biggest problems – global warming, pandemics, artificial intelligence, and misinformation comprise what philosopher Timothy Morton calls “hyperobjects”. They are so massive, interconnected, and long lasting that they touch every part of our lives at once, often in ways too complex for us to easily appreciate...Nor can they be solved in isolation.



**As Dr. Richard Restak explains, the best response to today's crises is to ask a simple question: what is the cost to brain health? If our brains aren't working optimally, these crises, taken together, will overcome us.**

By focusing on the brain, we see how forces like global warming, social media, and AI are not separate problems, but interconnected forces shaping our minds. This perspective not only clarifies the risks, but also points us towards innovative solutions. A wildfire, for example, is not just flames on a hillside. It's connected to rising global temperatures, smoke that alters brain function, stresses that spread across communities and the political economic systems that influence how we respond. In a similar way, misinformation isn't just a bad headline – it's tied to technology, trust, public health and smooth governmental functioning.

The first step towards solving these problems isn't by concentrating on one item at a time, but recognizing how deeply interconnected everything actually is. Once we see the web of connections – and the way they converge on brain health – new solutions will become possible.

*At the moment, protecting the brain is the most unifying goal we can have.*

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Richard Restak, MD**

Bio / Profile

Richard Restak, MD has built his career on unlocking the mysteries of the human brain—the command center that shapes everything we think, feel, and do. He is one of today’s most trusted voices in neuroscience, known for translating complex discoveries into insights the public can understand and apply. The author of 25 books on the brain, including three New York Times bestsellers, Restak now introduces **The 21st Century Brain**, which explores how modern life is changing our brains in ways never seen before in human history.

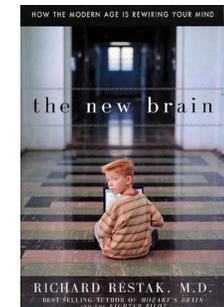
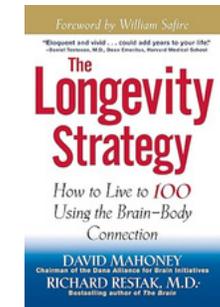
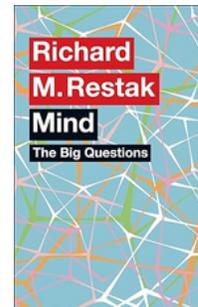
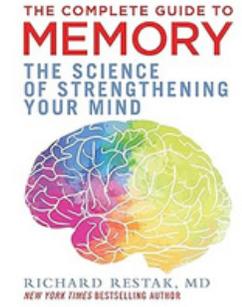
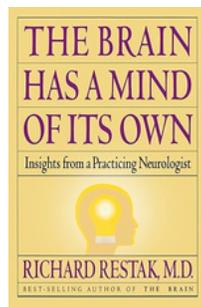
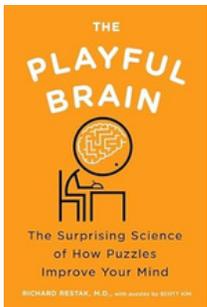
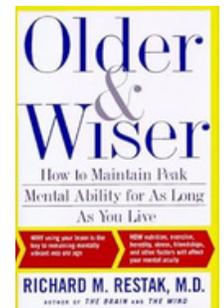
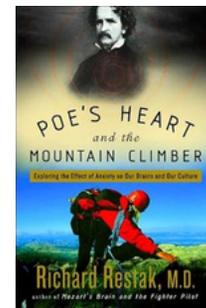
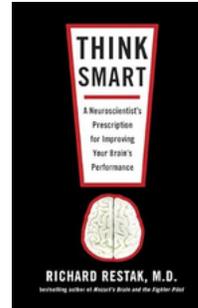
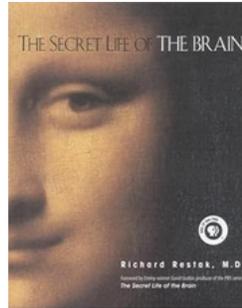
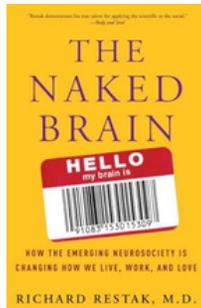
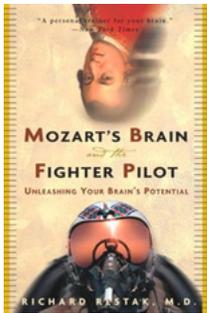
Alongside his books, Restak has also contributed essays and articles to leading publications including the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *London Observer*, *Huffington Post*, *Vogue*, and *The American Scholar*. He has been profiled in the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times* (London). Restak is also a recipient of the Claude Bernard Science Journalism Award, given by the National Society for Medical Research, and a former president of the American Neuropsychiatric Association.

He has lectured widely on brain and behavior at institutions as varied as the Smithsonian, the 92nd Street Y, the Library of Congress, NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, the U.S. Capitol, the Pentagon, the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, the Foreign Service Institute, Renaissance Weekend, the Aspen Institute, the Rubin Museum of Art, and the Brookings Institution. Restak’s media appearances include *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *NPR Weekend Edition*, *The Discovery Channel*, *The Diane Rehm Show*, *The Jim Bohannon Show*, *The Charlie Rose Show*, *All Things Considered* (NPR), and many more.

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No one makes the brain clearer—or more fascinating—than Dr. Richard Restak.

# Turning the mysteries of the mind into knowledge we can use.



**Twenty-five books. Three NYTimes Bestsellers.**

**A remarkable range—from memory, perception, and cognition to the impact of technology and modern life on brain health.**

Restak's books stand out because they bridge the gap between cutting-edge neuroscience and everyday life. He has explained how memory works and how it can fail, explored the link between the brain and creativity, traced the ways emotions influence decision-making, and now, in **The 21st Century Brain**, shows how contemporary forces are permanently reshaping our minds.

**What unites his body of work is accessibility:** Restak writes with clarity and authority, making complex discoveries understandable for general readers while remaining grounded in science. With this rare balance, he has become one of the most trusted interpreters of neuroscience, offering guidance not just to the medical community but to anyone who wants to better understand and protect the most important organ they have.

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# Sample Interview Questions

Modern life isn't just stressful—it is putting the brain at permanent risk by rewiring how we think, remember, and make decisions. Restak's message is urgent: the 21st century is placing the brain under threats that could leave lasting damage. The questions below open the conversation about how these challenges are reshaping the mind—and what we can do when we recognize the risks.

## The 21st Century Brain Under Threat

- You say the brain is vulnerable to modern forces. Are challenges like social media, AI, and climate change permanently changing how our brains work?
- Heat and humidity don't just make us uncomfortable—they affect thinking. Could rising global temperatures cause lasting damage to the brain?
- Anxiety is now so common it feels “normal.” What happens when constant anxiety rewires the brain over time?
- Wildfire smoke, air pollution, and even microplastics are ending up inside the brain. How much permanent harm can they cause to memory and brain health?

## Technology and AI

- The internet creates “filter bubbles” where people only see what confirms their beliefs. Could this trap our brains into narrow, long-term ways of thinking?
- AI is expanding fast but also using huge amounts of energy and spreading misinformation. How could this technology put the brain—and society—at risk for the future?

## Society, Memory, and Surveillance

- Constant surveillance is becoming part of daily life. What lasting effects does being watched have on the brain and our sense of freedom?
- Misinformation spreads faster than truth. Can repeated exposure to misinformation permanently change how our brains separate fact from fiction?

## Looking Forward

- You write about “hyperobjects,” like climate change, that are too big for the brain to easily grasp. How do we expand our thinking to handle challenges that could permanently reshape our life and yet are sometimes difficult to conceptualize?
- When readers finish **The 21st Century Brain**, what is the single most important step they can take to protect their brain for the long term?

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