



[Reptilian](#) [Limbic](#) [Neocortex](#)



Do you ever find yourself acting "weird" in a crowded elevator? Wanting to establish YOUR corner? Does hearing a certain song make you just about weep with very evocative memories? Do you love the challenge of a really hard brain teaser?

Know why? Because your brain is actually a triune brain. That's three brains in one!

The Triune Brain Model has been around since 1952, although it is not widely known or utilized by trainers or curriculum designers.

- The model was developed by Dr. Paul MacLean, chief of the Laboratory of Brain Evolution and Behavior at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland.
- The word **triune** alludes to MacLean's breakthrough understanding that the human brain has evolved through three primary stages. MacLean compares his work to that of an archeologist, searching back in time through layers of the brain's evolutionary development.
- He suggests we think of the present human brain as composed of three brains, of very different ages.

His tri-leveled model of the brain begins at its core with the smallest and oldest brain, the reptilian brain. Next is the limbic brain which is common to all mammals and developed after most reptiles of the dinosaur age perished. The neocortex surrounds both the reptilian and limbic brains and represents the youngest of the three.

This model, used in conjunction with the left/right brain theory, provides a powerful perspective on teaching and learning.