**Lesson 6: Dream dreams**

**Things that might prevent a person from living out their dreams:**

1. They don’t know what their dream is.
2. People don’t encourage them.
3. They might have to deal with lots of difficult things in their life which make it very hard to follow their dream.
4. Fear.

**Allegory:** A story with a hidden meaning

**Regrets:** Feeling sad because of things you haven’t done

**Unearth:** Dig out. Uncover.

**Lesson 5: Making decisions.**

**Possible things to do when making a tough decision:**

1. Listen to family by asking their opinion.
2. Listen to friends by asking their opinion.
3. Take time to really think about it.
4. Listen to your gut.
5. Practice mindful stillness to stop the chatter in your brain.
6. Listen to your emotions.
7. Make a pros and cons list.
8. Google or turn to social media for advice.

**Lesson 4: Breathing and the amygdala.**

**Neuroplasticity:** The brain’s ability to change and adapt. It’s called this because it can adapt like plastic.

**Mindful stillness:** The practice of becoming quiet and concentrating on our breathing.

**The benefits of mindful practice**: It quietens our amygdala so that we allow information to pass on to our prefrontal cortex where we can process it and make reflective decisions.

**Repetition:** This is key, if we want to rewire our brains and form new ways of thinking and acting

**Lesson 2: The amygdala and pre-frontal cortex**

**Amygdala highjack:** When the amygdala senses danger and switches off the prefrontal cortex so that the body can react to the threat. This means that our thinking, reasoning part of the brain gets turned off. This was great when we faced many life-threatening situations and had to react with ‘flight, fight or freeze.’ However, there aren’t so many of these nowadays, but the amygdala still reacts aggressively to little things that annoy us such as irritating siblings. This can get us into trouble.

**‘Fight, flight or freeze.’** Our body’s response to danger. We either run away (flee), fight, or freeze (try to disappear by hiding).

**React:** Do something without thinking (amygdala response)

**Reflect**: Do something after thinking about it carefully. (Pre-frontal cortex response)

**Lesson 3: Calming the amygdala.**

**Mindful awareness:** Giving attention to what’s happening around you.

**Examples of mindful behaviour:** Trying foods that are different from anything you’ve eaten before, listening to a new song all the way through before you decide whether or not you like it, looking at someone’s face when you’re talking to them.

**Examples of unmindful behaviour:** Trying to do too many things such as walking and messaging at the same time, liking things because other people like them, thinking about what you’re going to say next when someone’s speaking to you.

**Lesson 1: Brian function and puberty**

**Limbic system:** Part of the brain that contains the amygdala and hippocampus. It grows and develops rapidly during puberty. It influences exploratory behaviour such as trying new things and taking risks.

**Pre-frontal cortex:** Located at the front of the brain. It’s responsible for decision-making, maintaining focus, and reasoning. It doesn’t fully develop until a person is in their mid-twenties.

**Hippocampus:** Responsible for storing and creating memories.

**Amygdala:** The ‘guard dog’ of the brain. On high alert and ready to protect a person from danger

**TOPIC 6: Brain function**