

## Your Brain: The Karate Kid

How the brain uses defense mechanisms to protect your heart from pain

Imagine your heart and brain as people, in fact, they are siblings. Heart, a sweet and open toddler, is full of love, optimism, and innocence. He's always ready to trust and connect, unaware of the dangers life can bring. His older brother, brain, is a teenager, has seen more of the world, is a bit jaded, skeptical, and protective. Life has already thrown its punches, and brain knows all too well that heart needs guarding. To protect his little brother from getting hurt, brain learned karate – a set of moves designed to defend heart from pain. These moves, known as psychological defense mechanisms, are brain's way of keeping heart from enduring too much emotional distress.

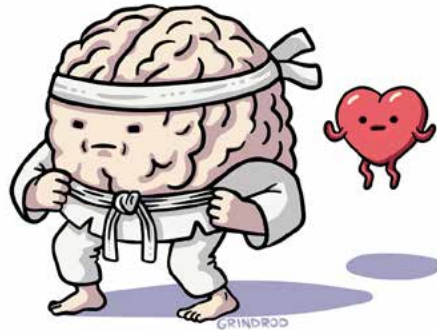
One of brain's go-to moves is **repression**. It's a swift block, where brain pushes painful feelings, memories, or thoughts down. Heart doesn't even get a chance to feel the blow because brain hides the pain so effectively.

Next up is **denial**, brain's classic evasion technique. When a situation is too painful or hard to accept, brain refuses to acknowledge it. He turns a blind eye and tells assertively tells heart "Nothing's wrong here", even though something definitely is. Heart trusts brain because he is young but also intuitively brain is not being truthful. Heart may also feel betrayed by brain for keeping secrets from him and keeping him in a fantasy. He may feel silly or stupid when he learns the truth that others around him may have already known.

When brain uses **projection**, he cleverly redirects the uncomfortable emotions onto someone else. Instead of admitting that he feels fear, anger, or sadness, brain accuses others of feeling those emotions. Heart remains protected, but relationships with others can get complicated as pain tossing can hurt others and make them angry.

**Displacement** is another karate move, where brain avoids confronting the real source of pain. Instead, brain lets out the frustration in a safer place. If heart is hurt by a close friend, brain might direct the anger toward something less threatening, like getting annoyed with a stranger or snapping at a loved one.

Then there's rationalization, brain's intellectual block. This move helps brain explain



away painful experiences with seemingly logical reasons. Heart might be hurt, but brain swoops in, telling him it "wasn't a big deal", "it's not that bad" or "it happened for a reason".

Finally, brain, who is also a part-time comedian, **deflects with humour**. Instead of feeling vulnerable, brain will make a joke, as he knows how much heart loves to laugh. The laughter acts like a playful karate flip, diverting attention away from the emotional discomfort. Both rationalization and humour deflection can be soothing, like aloe vera on a sunburn, but it won't address the underlying issue of cancer.

While these defense mechanisms are essential for protecting heart in the moment, they're only meant for short-term use and do not resolve the deeper underlying emotions or issues. The more karate brain does, the harder it becomes to experience peace, love, and belonging. While brain was only ever trying to protect heart, he also needs to trust heart's voice as he provides imperative information about what is best for both siblings. When we honour our emotions instead of deflecting them, we gain the clarity to resolve issues and prevent future heartaches. This is the path to peace and genuine emotional connection, where heart and brain can finally rest in harmony.

Words: **Scout Smith-O'Leary**

Scout is a Relationship Therapist providing counselling to couples & individuals. Based in Manly. Telehealth available. Call **0410 030 463** or visit **thelovescout.com** or for more info or to book a session.

IMAGE: TRISTAN GRINDROD



Chech mate, Charlie's crooning is not to be missed

### Music

## Don't miss the 'Legends of Swing' Show at Dee Why RSL

Australia's best male vocal performer, Charlie Chech, will be hitting the Showroom at Dee Why RSL Club on Sunday 8 December.

You do not want to miss seeing this brilliant young vocalist for a memorable afternoon of music and crooning in his newest production 'The Legends of Swing'. Charlie and his jazz quintet will celebrate the best-of-the-best from Frank Sinatra, The Rat Pack, Michael Bublé, Tony Bennett, Bobby Darin and many more!

As a special treat, and in the lead-up to the Festive Season, the 8 December performance will feature some of your favourite Christmas tunes! Bring your family and friends and celebrate the Festive Season in style!

Charlie has received rave reviews for his performances and was crowned Australia's Best Male Vocal Performer at the prestigious ACE (Australian

Club Entertainment) Awards, one of the youngest vocalists ever to win the title. His all-star 5-piece jazz ensemble will be led by Australian music maestros Clive Lendich on guitar and Graham Jesse on saxophone.

As a treat for Dee Why RSL guests, Charlie will be joined on stage by the incredible Northern Beaches vocalist Anna Walding. Co-director of the popular covers band The Q.C. Collective, Anna has a warm, soulful tone and a dynamic stage presence. Charlie and Anna will be performing some beautiful duets together.

Charlie has held several sold-out shows at a variety of prestigious venues, including the renowned Brisbane Jazz



Club; Cardea at Barangaroo; Lazybones; Foundry 616; and Claire's Kitchen. He has also staged four major headline shows at Hornsby RSL Club – as one of the youngest performers the club has featured, an extraordinary feat!

The young crooner has been featured on Studio 10; Top 50 Australian Idol; The Today Show; The 7.30 Report; Sunrise; and 2GB's Ben Fordham program.

Charlie's debut EP 'Checkmate' is available on all streaming platforms and as a CD purchase on his website [www.charliechech.com](http://www.charliechech.com)

As a show exclusive, meet Charlie after the concert for a signed copy of his EP 'Checkmate'!

#### Buy tickets

Visit [charliechech.com/events](http://charliechech.com/events) and [deewhyrsl.com.au/ticketed-shows](http://deewhyrsl.com.au/ticketed-shows)

Follow Charlie on Instagram @charliechech.music and Facebook @CharlieChechSinger

Words: **Liam Carroll**