

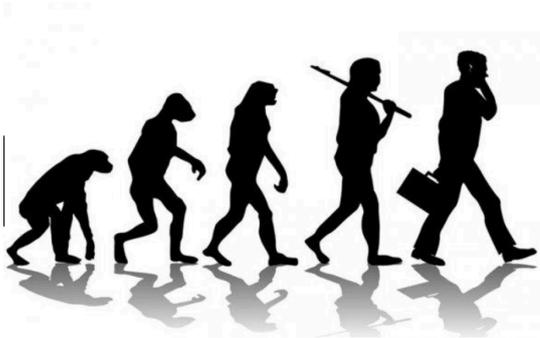


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**This article explores why our minds think negatively.**

Do you have a ‘caveperson’ mind? I bet you do. Read on to find out more about how our minds create psychological suffering.

And don’t forget, our last article was about empathy. Click [here](#) to find out more about whether you have empathy, or whether you might need to develop it, and to access all our

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## Working With Your Caveperson Mind

**By Amanda Pulford**  
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**(BPsych Hons, MPsych Clin)**

Did you know that you have a ‘caveperson’ mind? Our minds have evolved to ‘think negatively’, or more accurately, to think in such a way that they naturally create psychological suffering. Why and how has this happened? Read on to find out more.

The stone age mind was geared towards safety. It had to avoid threats, keep us safe from danger, protect us from harm, ensure that we didn’t get cut off from the group, and prepare us

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for future dangers. This was its 'top priority'. Just think what would have happened if we weren't on the lookout for danger, and if we weren't good at predicting, spotting, or avoiding danger. Ultimately, we wouldn't survive as a species. We would die at a very young age, which would mean we wouldn't procreate. Or if we did procreate, our offspring wouldn't survive because we wouldn't be there to take care of them. So, the caveperson mind developed to keep us safe. We procreated, and we passed on those 'keep yourself safe' genes to the next generation, and the next, and the next.

It was 'safety first' for the caveperson's mind, and we have inherited this from our ancient ancestors. However, in our modern mind we react to difficult thoughts, feelings and memories the same way a stone age mind reacted to dangerous beasts : fight or flight! Below are some examples of how our modern mind reacts the same as a caveperson mind.

**Caveperson Mind :** "Watch out! There could be a sabre tooth tiger around the corner that's going to eat you."

**Modern Mind :** Worrying, catastrophising, predicting the worst, and avoiding anything that scares you.

**Caveperson Mind :** "Watch out! There was a sabre tooth tiger around that corner last week. It might be there again!"

**Modern Mind :** Projecting painful past memories into a scary future. Predicting that it will happen again.

**Caveperson Mind :** You survive an encounter with a sabre tooth tiger, so you go over the events in your mind and remember what you did to survive, so you're prepared for when it happens the next time.

**Modern Mind :** We go over painful memories; dwelling on them, reliving them, even when there's nothing useful to learn, or the lesson has been well and truly learned.

After many, many, many years of evolution, our minds are doing this kind of thing all the time! They're trying to save us from getting hurt. While it may feel like at times your mind is making life more difficult for you; it's just your mind doing its number one job – trying to keep you safe, trying to save you from pain.

If you think your caveperson mind is being unhelpful and you want some assistance with it, then please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, [amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au](mailto:amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au) or [click here](#)

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