

The Ageless Brain: How to Sharpen and Protect Your Mind for a Lifetime

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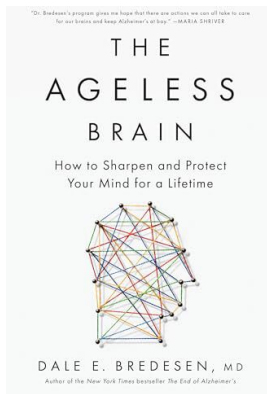
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Book Title: The Ageless Brain: How to Sharpen and Protect Your Mind for a Lifetime

Author: Dale E. Bredesen, MD

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If the insults that degrade the brain are replaced by healthy nutrition and lifestyle, is the brain capable of healing similar to other organs? Contrary to conventional thinking in neurology, Dr Dale Bredesen gives a resounding yes.

Bredesen, a research neurologist, has a series of cases dating back to 2014 when he published his first report of remission of early Alzheimer's disease.¹ Two years later he published a report of 11 patients, and subsequently hundreds of patients were helped on his protocol.^{2,3}

Bredesen is best described as a neurobiologist. Like his mentor, Leroy Hood, MD, PhD, he studied biology at Cal Tech before going to medical school. For more than 20 years, he searched for a magic bullet to treat Alzheimer's disease. All the drugs that could reduce the pathological markers of Alzheimer's, amyloid plaques and tau protein bundles, actually resulted in patients getting worse. Bredesen realized these are the scar tissue on the chronic inflammation causing the disease.³

After input from his wife in primary care, Bredesen turned his attention to intensive diet and lifestyle modifications as a way to assist patients with early Alzheimer's disease. After finding initial success with this approach, Bredesen developed a protocol he named ReCODE (reversing cognitive decline).^{1,2}

Bredesen is a controversial figure in the academic neurology community. A weakness of his research is that he publishes patient success stories and is not clear about who succeeds and who fails. He has not conducted randomized clinical trials. Compared with his previous books,^{3–5} *The Ageless Brain* is more honest in discussing patients who do not respond to the protocol. A recent randomized controlled trial validated that lifestyle factors could improve cognitive function.⁶

The Ageless Brain addresses new biomarker testing for Alzheimer's disease by measuring for the accumulation of amyloid and tau proteins. Information on this testing is valuable for application in family medicine.

The Ageless Brain provides a prescription for keeping a healthy brain to age 100 and beyond. The highlights of this approach are

- Maintain a normal blood sugar and avoid high glycemic foods.
- Practice intermittent fasting of 12 hours or more daily.
- Avoid inflammatory foods like grains and ultra-processed food.
- Have low inflammatory markers such as a C-reactive protein less than one.
- Avoid toxins such as lead, mercury, and arsenic. These levels can be checked in standard blood tests. Avoiding mercury containing fish such as tuna and swordfish will lower mercury levels within 3 months.

The recommended diet is called KetoFlex 12/3. It is a ketogenic Mediterranean diet that is low in carbohydrates, with 12 hours of fasting, including no food 3 hours before sleep. Other dietary recommendations are foods high in phytonutrients such as polyphenols, high in fiber, high in monosaturated and omega-3 fats such as in avocados, nuts, and seeds. No grains or dairy. No simple carbohydrates. Wild caught low mercury

fish such as salmon, anchovies, sardines, and herring. Only pasture raised, organic, if possible, chicken, and eggs. Only grass-fed beef. The diet is rich in cruciferous and leafy green vegetables.

Having an ageless brain also requires regular physical activity with movement and strength activities daily, restful unmedicated sleep for 7 to 8 hours nightly, stress management, a rich social life with meaning and purpose.

In today's modern culture with an abundance of simple sugars and processed foods, following this lifestyle consistently is not easy, but the rewards of having a healthy brain and body are certainly worth it. Overall, I found this book exceptionally informative and have recommended it to many patients. *The Ageless Brain* has caused me, at age 75, to stop thinking about retirement and begin strategizing how I may keep working until I am 100!

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