

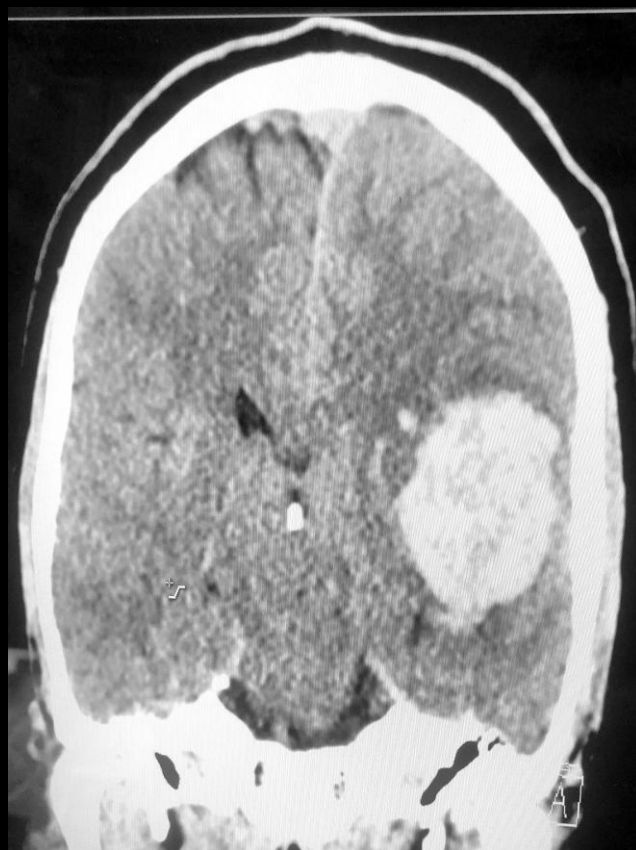
From Awareness to **Action**

Stephen Albright

Living with aphasia since 2020. Founder, AphasiaGPT.

This is one neuron.
You have about 86 billion of them.

Herculano-Houzel, 2009



2020

A stroke took my words.

AVM rupture

Two brain surgeries

Half my vision

Severe aphasia

What helped me

1

Understand your brain

What it wants vs. what it needs.

2

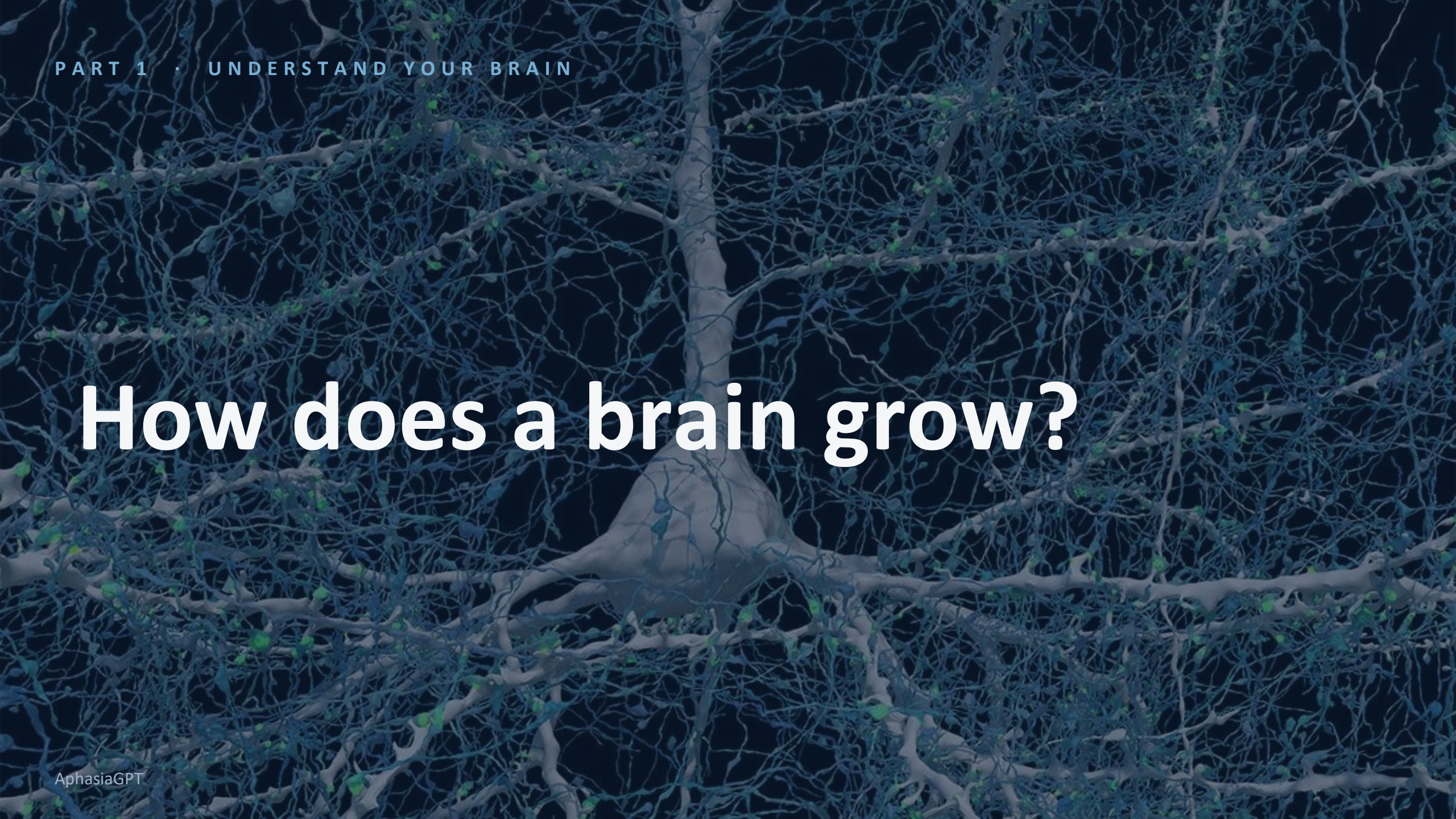
Take action

Push your brain. Relax your brain.

3

Set goals

The only way to stay consistent.



PART 1 • UNDERSTAND YOUR BRAIN

How does a brain grow?

How does a brain grow?

YOUR BRAIN LOVES

Predictable

Comfortable

Easy

Sugar and junk

Lazy

HOW TO GROW YOUR BRAIN

→ Unpredictable

→ Uncomfortable

→ Hard

→ Healthy food

→ Exercise

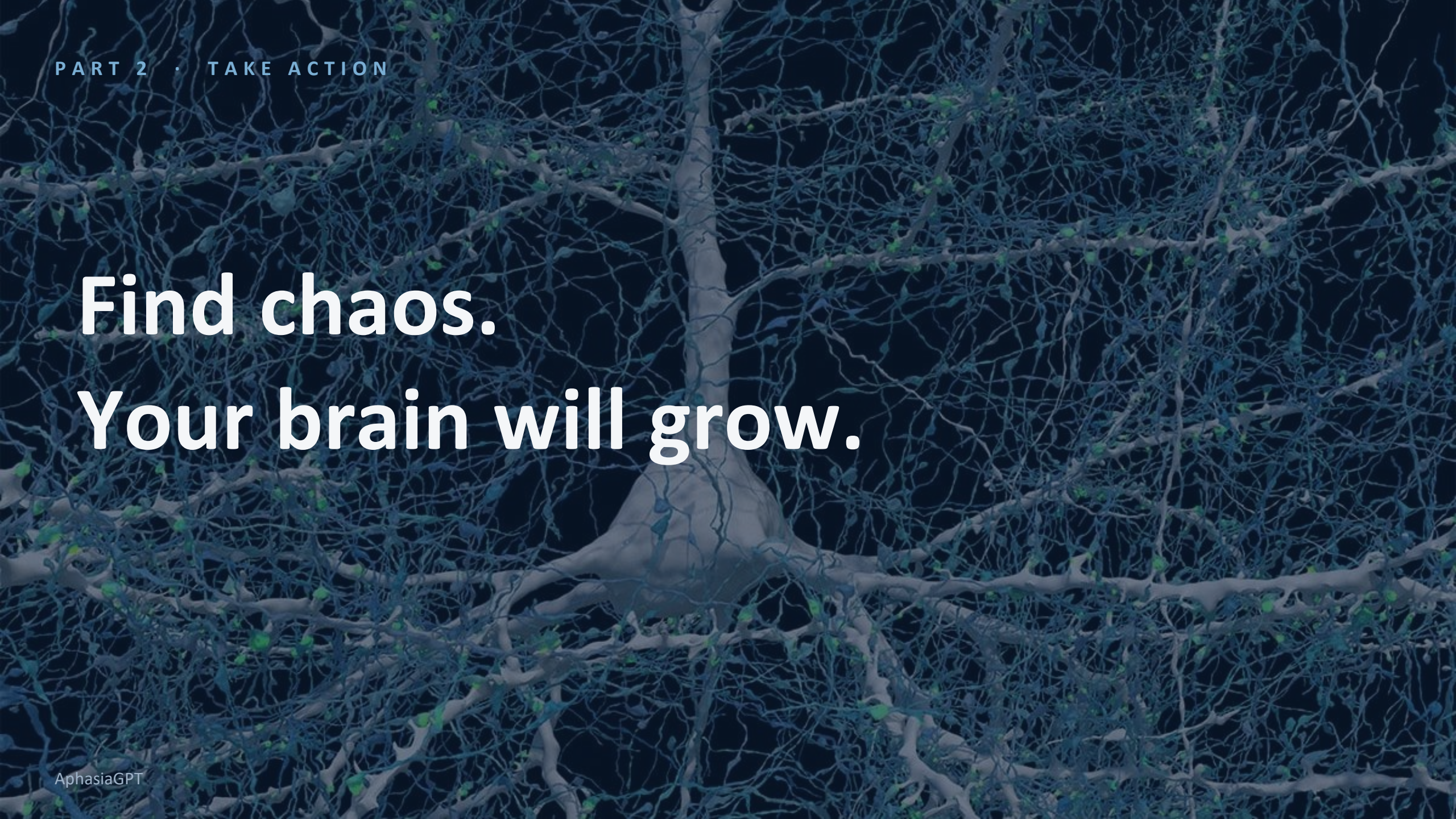
The brain learns when it is surprised.

The dose

Too little, and nothing changes. Too much, and you burn out.

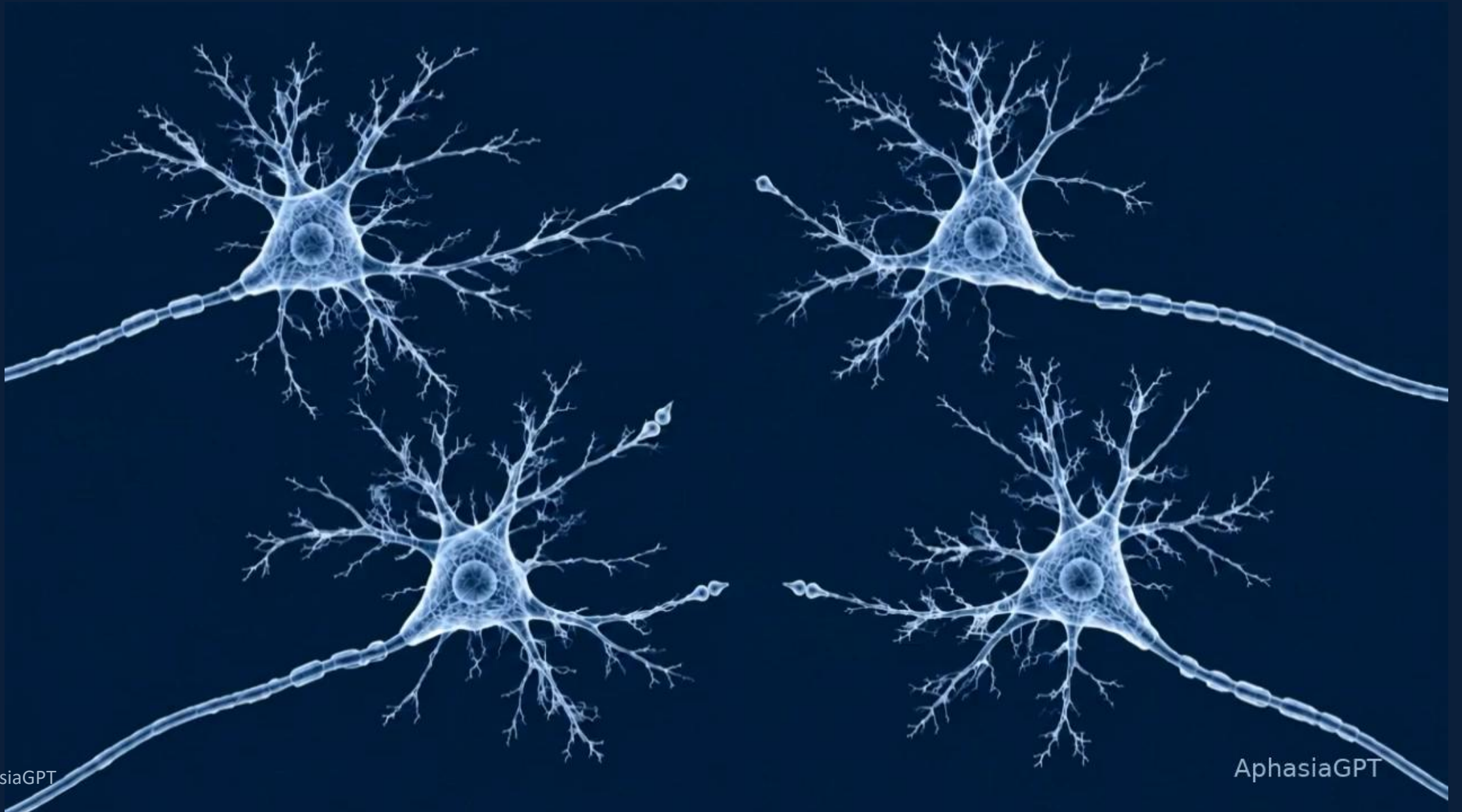


Burnout is real: pain, headaches, exhaustion. Rest fixes it. It takes time.



**Find chaos.
Your brain will grow.**

PART 2 · TAKE ACTION · PUSH YOUR BRAIN



Find chaos.

Chaos means uncomfortable. Everyone has a different uncomfortable. It can be small.

Order your own coffee

Make a call every day

Read out loud to someone

Talk to a stranger

Ask questions

Have a conversation in a loud room

Write an email and send it

Take a class, any class

Try improv

Apply for a job

Do an interview

Present, even to two people

Expect failure.

If it is not hard, your brain is not growing.

Relax the brain.

You push during the day. Your brain rewires while you rest.

Sleep

9 hours

A rewiring brain needs more sleep, not less.
Naps count.

TIPS

Dark room. Cover every light.

Cold. About 65°F.

No screens the last hour. Red light if you need light.

Same bedtime every night.

No caffeine after noon.

Healthy food

Read the label. If you cannot pronounce it, do not eat it.



Healthy food

Read the label. If you cannot pronounce it, do not eat it.

EAT

Green vegetables: spinach, kale, broccoli

Berries

Meat, fish, eggs

Nuts, olive oil, avocado

Lots of water



DO NOT EAT

Processed food

Added sugar

Soda, energy drinks

Alcohol



Exercise

Get your heart rate up. Try to sweat.

Exercise

Get your heart rate up. Try to sweat.

30 minutes, most days.

When you sweat, your brain gets more blood and makes the chemical that grows new connections.

TIPS

Walk in the morning or at night

Swim, bike, row, run: whatever your body allows

Lift something heavy twice a week

Try to sweat once a day

Meditation

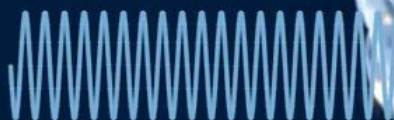
A busy brain runs fast. Meditation slows it down.

Meditation

A busy brain runs fast. Meditation slows it down.

BETA

Chaos.



20 cycles per second



Set your goals.

My goal in 2020:

Back at my job in New York City within one year of my stroke.

Set your goals.

My goal in 2020:

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MAKE IT SMART

S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable

R Relevant

T Time-bound

Then the small goals that get you there

1 YEAR

Back at my job in New York City within 1 year of my stroke

Then the small goals that get you there

6 MONTHS

Give a 5-minute talk for family and friends every week and ask for feedback

1 YEAR

Back at my job in New York City within 1 year of my stroke

Then the small goals that get you there

THIS MONTH

Send 30 emails to family and friends by the end of the month and ask for feedback

6 MONTHS

Give a 5-minute talk for family and friends every week and ask for feedback

1 YEAR

Back at my job in New York City within 1 year of my stroke

Then the small goals that get you there

EVERY DAY

Read the news out loud
for 30 minutes every
morning

THIS MONTH

Send 30 emails to family
and friends by the end of
the month and ask for
feedback

6 MONTHS

Give a 5-minute talk for
family and friends every
week and ask for feedback

1 YEAR

Back at my job in New
York City within 1 year of
my stroke

Put your goals on your mirror.

Read them every morning. Out loud.

Affirmations

Words you tell your brain every morning. A couple of my current ones.

Fear of talking is my old wound, not the truth. I walk toward the conversation.

I am not here to sound good. I am here to listen, understand, and connect.

Everything is unfolding step by step. I do not need to be finished. I need to be present.

A little more than yesterday.

1% better than yesterday.

That is how a habit forms.





Two more things.

ONE

Gratitude.

Not who you want to be. What you can be grateful for right now.

Technology is your friend.

Claude. ChatGPT. Gemini. AphasiaGPT. Use them every day.

Talk to it

Practice a conversation. Ask it to slow down. Ask again.

Write with it

Emails, texts, your resume.
Say it out loud first, then fix it together.

Build with it

An app. A game. A video. Be creative. It grows your brain.

What helped me

Understand your brain

It loves comfortable. It grows on uncomfortable.
Everyone has a dose. Find yours.

Take action

Find your chaos. Expect failure.
Then rest: sleep, healthy food, exercise, meditation.

Set goals

One big goal, made SMART.
Small goals that climb to it.
A little more than yesterday.

Two more things

Gratitude, right now.
Technology, every day.

Thank you.

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Happy to talk. Send me a note.

