PROSPEKTIV 2025: Dr. Taufiq Pasiak Discusses the Importance of Neuroscience-Based Character Building

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UPNVJ Public Relations â€“ *If you want to change the world, start small* â€“ this is the quote from Admiral William McRaven that opened Dr. Taufiq Fredrik Pasiak, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Veteran National Development University Jakarta (FK UPNVJ), during UPNVJâ€™s PROSPEKTIV 2025 event. Through a neuroscience approach, Dr. Taufiq emphasized that character building is not an instant process, but rather the result of consistent and conscious brain training. UPNVJâ€™s new students were invited to explore how discipline, reflection, and simple habits can change brain structure and shape individuals with integrity.

In his presentation, titled "Character Building Based on Neuroscience," Dr. Taufiq emphasized that neuroscience provides an internal map of how behavior, emotions, and values are formed in the human brain. He stated that character is formed through conscious and repeated training of brain networks. "If character is the result of a trainable biological process, then we can train it consciously through repetition, self-control, and meaning and reflex training," he said.

He then introduced the key concepts of neurocharacter, namely three brain traits that form the basis of self-development: neuroplasticity, imagination and visualization, and interoception (internal awareness). These three, he argued, are key to humans being able to change habits, manage emotions, and strengthen moral control.

Dr. Taufiq also outlined five structures of the Brain-Character System, namely:

Prefrontal Cortex , which regulates self-control, planning, and decision-making.
Cingulate Cortex , the center of cognitive-emotional integration that fosters empathy and integrity.
Basal Ganglia , forming habits and behavioral routines.
Temporal Lobe , which plays a role in awareness of values, morals, and spirituality.
The Limbic System , the center of emotion and motivation that fuels enthusiasm and positive emotional attachments

In his presentation, he also emphasized that discipline is a key force in training the brain to build character. Discipline, Dr. Taufiq said, is not just a habit, but also the formation of new neural pathways (neuroplasticity) that strengthen resilience and focus.

The prefrontal cortex, a structure in the human brain, acts as a control center, regulating decisions, controlling impulses, and planning for the long term. "Training discipline is like training a brain muscle. So every small habit strengthens our self-control system," he explained.

So how do you build discipline through brain training? To answer this question, Dr. Taufiq suggests four practical steps in training brain discipline: 1) setting clear goals, 2) practicing delayed gratification, 3) using positive reinforcement, and 4) maintaining consistency. Small habits like waking up early, tidying up your workspace, and daily reflection have been shown to activate the areas of the brain that control behavior, which play a major role in character formation.

Besides discipline, two other character traits emphasized are creativity and self-integrity. Creativity, he argued, arises from neural flexibility and the courage to fail, while integrity is formed from a balance between moral emotions and cognitive control. "Lies create conflict in the brain, while integrity fosters coherence between thoughts, emotions, and actions," he said, emphasizing the importance of brain-body balance in morality.

Closing his session, Dr. Taufiq delivered a thought-provoking, reflective message, â€œCharacter building is not only about moral training, but also about improving the brain-body regulatory system that supports morality.â€

Through this material, new UPNVJ students are invited to understand that becoming a person of character is not only about what one does, but about how the brain is trained to think, feel, and act with discipline, integrity, and complete self-awareness.
