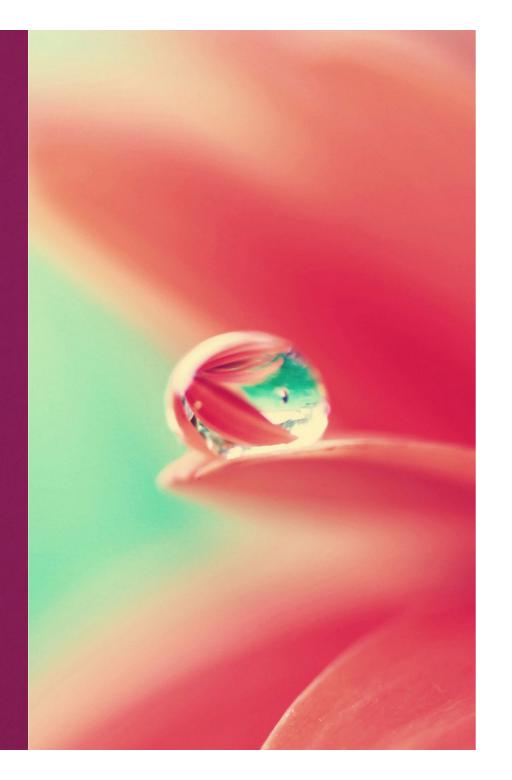
Think not lightly of good, saying, "It will not come to me."

Drop by drop is the water pot filled.

Likewise, the wise one, Gathering it little by little, Fills oneself with good.

Dhammapada 9.122



## The Professional Course



#### In Positive Neuroplasticity

© Rick Hanson, Ph.D., 2016



1

Foundational Knowledge of Positive Neuroplasticity

# Foundations

#### What is the Practice of Positive Neuroplasticity?

#### The deliberate internalization of beneficial experiences

Informally called "taking in the good"

#### Welcome to the Professional Course

#### Aims

Explain. Guide. Embody.

Deepen embodiment of positive neuroplasticity (PN)

Understand theory and have practical skills

Deepen supportive qualities

Use PN with others, typically in occupational settings

#### Methods

Internal practice, trying methods with a partner, small group discussion, whole group lecture and discussion

Presumed capabilities to work with others, give and get feedback skillfully, and basic understanding of PN



#### Who Is Here?

- Therapists and counselors?
- Coaches?
- Mindfulness trainers?
- Healthcare providers?
- Business consultants?
- Managers?
- · Parents?
- Educators?
- Yoga teachers?
- Bodywork providers?

#### Let's Practice

Centering and grounding yourself

Accepting your inner world as it is

Opening to and taking in a growing sense of:

Peace | Contentment | Love



Pick a partner and choose an A and a B (A's go first). Then take turns, with one person speaking while the partner mainly listens, exploring these questions:

TIP: If you're alone, reflect or journal.

Imagine that you have just done the Positive Neuroplasticity Training and you are telling an interested friend or colleague about it.

Who does not know about PNT and asks you these questions (~2 min. each)...

#### Could You Tell Me . . . ?

- 1. In a nutshell, what was it about?
- 2. What did you gain personally?
- 3. How can you use your mind to change your brain?
- 4. Will this get you attached to happy moments?
- 5. What's this HEAL process? (4 min.)
- 6. Why is the 4<sup>th</sup> step optional?
- 7. Can you use this approach for any special needs?
- 8. Are there risks or cautions?

How was that? What was easy to explain? What was harder?

#### Growing Strengths

#### Examples of Inner Strengths?

Understandings

Capabilities

**Positive emotions** 

**Attitudes** 

**Motivations** 

**Virtues** 

Move around the room, interacting briefly with others, one person at a time.

One person says: "One strength in me is X."
The other person says: "I recognize X in you."

Then switch roles.

Then find another person and do it again.



Keep it real. And take it in.

Move around the room, interacting briefly with others, one person at a time.

First person: "One strength I'm developing is X."

Second person: "How are you developing X?"

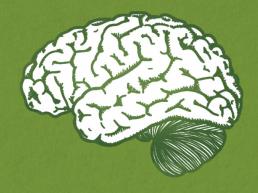
First person: "I'm developing X by \_\_\_\_\_."

Then switch roles.

Then find another person and do it again.



Keep it real. And take it in.



2

The Benefits of Growing Inner Resources

#### Challenges, Vulnerabilities, Strengths

#### How was that?

Course over time =

Challenges + Vulnerabilities + Strengths

What inner strengths would help with:

Anxiety | Feeling hurt | Addictions Needing to assert yourself

#### Cultivation De-fuels Craving

- It is wholesome to wish for the happiness and welfare of all beings including yourself.
- We rest the mind upon positive states so that the brain may gradually take their shape. This disentangles us from craving as we increasingly rest in a peace, contentment, and love that is independent of external conditions.
- With time, even the practice of cultivation falls away like a raft that is no longer needed once we reach the farther shore.

We will soon form "pods," groups of 3-5 people. We'll start with pods containing diverse interests, and then see later if we should form special interest pods.

In your pod, address one question one person at a time, then do next question:

Background, intended applications of PN – and how do you feel about being open here among peers?

What is **profound** about PN?

#### Group Discussion

What is profound about positive neuroplasticity?

#### What Is **Profound** About PN?

(1)

- Receptive intimacy with experiencing
- Recognizing the beneficial in experience
- Recognizing good facts all around
- Courage to change and be changed
- Benevolence toward yourself
- Autonomy inside your own mind especially when pushed by forces
- Self-reliance; don't need therapeutic authorities

#### What Is **Profound** About PN?

(2)

- Recognizing challenges and suffering for which we need inner strengths
- Appreciating soft longing heart of others
- Opportunities for rapid success, positive feedback
- Undoing underlying causes of "craving"
- "Cultural disobedience"
- Radical receptivity while letting go
- Gentle mastery in experiencing

#### Review of HEAL

[background]

#### In the Garden of the Mind

**1 2 3** 

Be with what is there

Decrease the negative

Increase the positive

Witness. Pull weeds. Plant flowers.

Let be. Let go. Let in.

Recognizing. Releasing. Resourcing.

"Being with" is primary – but not enough. We also need wise effort: releasing & resourcing.

### Learning – changing neural structure and function, proceeds in two stages:

Encoding > Consolidation

Activation > Installation

State > Trait

Inner strengths are grown from experiences of them or related factors

- activated states - that are installed as traits.

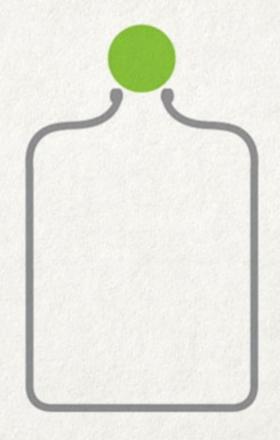
#### How to Take in the Good: HEAL

#### Activation

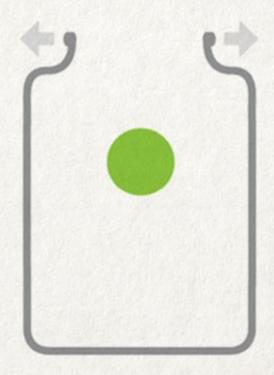
1. Have a beneficial experience.

#### Installation

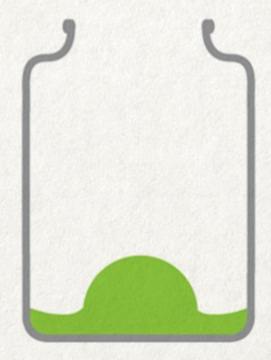
- 2. Enrich it.
- 3. Absorb it.
- 4. Link positive and negative material. (Optional)



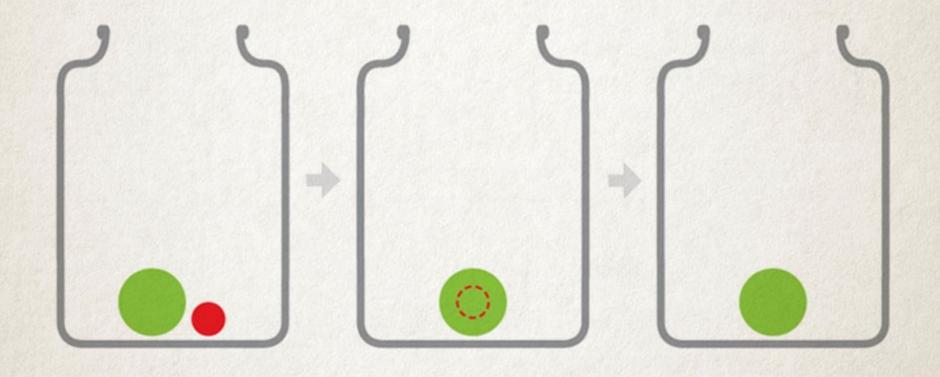
Have a Beneficial Experience



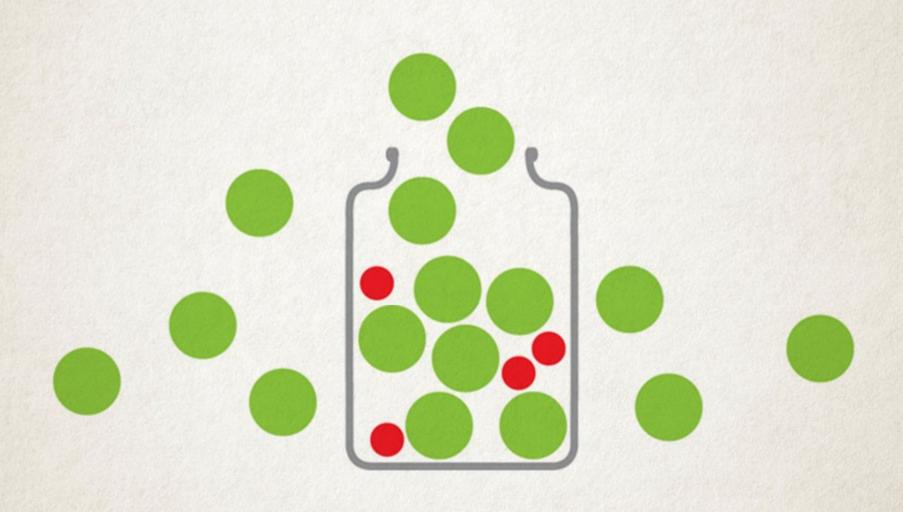
**E**nrich It



Absorb It



Link Positive & Negative Material



Have It, Enjoy It

# Using HEAL with Others

#### Resources for HEAL

- Intention; willing to feel good
- Identified target experience
- · Openness to the experience; embodiment
- Mindfulness of the HEAL steps to sustain them
- Working through blocks

#### The Four Ways to Offer a Method

- Doing it implicitly
- Teaching it and leaving it up to the person
- Doing it explicitly with the person
- Asking the person to do it on his or her own

#### Using HEAL in Trainings

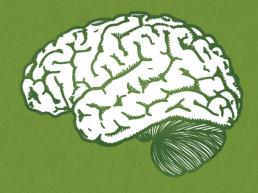
- Take a few minutes to explain its rationale and teach it explicitly.
- In the flow, occasionally encourage enriching and absorbing, using natural language.
- Tell people they can use HEAL outside of class to deepen internalization of what they're learning.
- Don't use HEAL when it's inappropriate (e.g., radically choiceless awareness, highly self-critical about any kind of performance).

## Synergies of HEAL and Mindfulness

- Improved mindfulness enhances HEAL.
- HEAL increases <u>factors</u> of mindfulness (e.g., executive functions, self-compassion, determination, distress tolerance).
- HEAL heightens learning from mindfulness:
  - The sense of stable presence itself
  - Disidentifying from reactions
  - Deepening centeredness
  - Insight into nature of experience

## A Demonstration

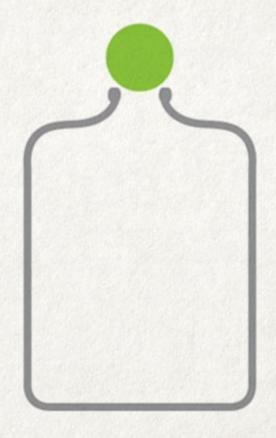
- A volunteer? Briefly: what's the issue?
- I'll focus on resourcing; with more time, there'd be more inclusion of letting be and letting go.
- Potential key points:
  - Natural process of many choices along the way
  - Getting to the challenge as it's experienced
  - Identifying useful state(s)/trait(s); picking one(s) that is/are accessible
  - Slowing it down; encouraging embodiment
  - Linking when it feels right



3

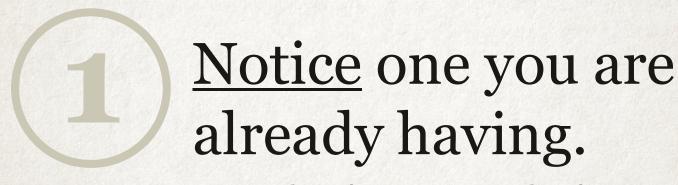
Helping Others to Have Beneficial Experiences

## Skills with "Noticing"

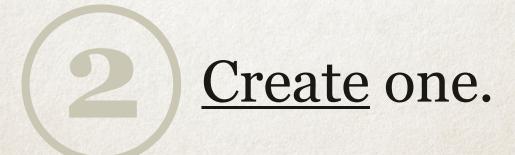


Have a Good Experience

## The Two Ways To Have a Beneficial Experience



- In the foreground of awareness
- In the background



It is remarkable that there are always beneficial aspects of ongoing experience.

There are always opportunities for internalizing beneficial experiences

## Elements of Experience

## **Thought**

belief • perspective • expectation • image • memory • idea

## **Perception**

sensation (e.g., relaxation, vitality) • sight • sound • taste • smell

## **Emotion**

feeling • mood

## **Desire**

want • wish • hope • drive • motivation • purpose • dream • passion

## Action

behavior • posture • knowing how to



Pick a partner and choose an A and a B. Go all the way through (~10 minutes) and then switch roles.

TIP: If you're alone, reflect or journal.

A's choose one or more beneficial experiences. B's, help A's identify the five aspects of experience: thoughts, perceptions, emotions, desires, and actions.

As a bonus, you can take in these aspects of experience as you identify them.

## Elements of Experience

## **Thought**

belief • perspective • expectation • image • memory • idea

## **Perception**

sensation (e.g., relaxation, vitality) • sight • sound • taste • smell

## **Emotion**

feeling • mood

## **Desire**

want • wish • hope • drive • motivation • purpose • dream • passion

## Action

behavior • posture • knowing how to

## Skills with "Creating"

## How to Create A Beneficial Experience

## Look for good facts in:

- 1. Immediate situation
- 2. Current or recent events
- 3. Stable conditions
- 4. Your character
- 5. The past
- 6. The future
- 7. Bad situations
- 8. The lives of others
- 9. Your imagination

- 10. Care about others
- 11. Directly evoke a beneficial experience
- 12. Produce good facts
- 13. Share about good facts with others



Both are challenging for many people.

## Turning a Good Fact Into a Good Experience

- Bring awareness to your body.
- Soften and open.
- Be a little active in your mind.
- Imagine how another person might feel.
- Be kind to yourself, and **encourage** a good experience.



Find a partner, pick A and B. Go back and forth about each type of good fact (~90 sec. each), then on to the next type:

TIP: If you're alone, reflect or journal.

- 1. Immediate situation
- 2. Current or recent events
- 3. Stable conditions
- 4. One's character
- 5. The past
- 6. The future
- 7. Bad situations
- 8. The lives of others

## Helping People with Blocks

## Reflection on "Blocks"

Blocks = mental factors that reduce, derail, inhibit, or defend against mental activities that would be beneficial for a person.

Blocks are not bad. They are normal, a means of coping, often a "solution" that once made sense but is now a "problem."

Explore the benefits, payoffs, functions, purpose of the block. "Join with the defense."

Then see if there might be better ways to accomplish the same purpose.

## Blocks to Any Inner Practice

- Distractibility
- Out of touch with experience
- Uncomfortable bringing attention inward
- Over-analyzing, pulling out of the experience

## Blocks to Taking in the Good

- It's hard to receive, even a good experience
- Concern you'll lose your edge; fear you'll lower your guard
- Idea that feeling good is disloyal or unfair to those who suffer
- Belief you don't deserve to feel good
- Not wanting to risk disappointment
- As a woman, socialized to make others happy, not yourself
- As a man, socialized to be stoic and not care about feelings
- You've been punished for being energized or happy
- Good things in you have been dismissed
- Positive experiences associate to negative ones
- "What's the point in feeling good, bad things will still happen"
- Payoffs in not feeling good
- Not wanting to let others off the hook
- TG is craving that leads to suffering

## A Demonstration

- A volunteer? Briefly: what's the block?
- Potential key points:
  - There's often poignance about the block: the pain it's been managing, how hard life has been. Sometimes the block becomes a major clinical focus.
  - Being attentive to: "you don't get it; easy for you to say; yes, but; I'm afraid to try something different"
  - Identifying the dreaded experience the block prevents; finding and installing resources to risk or cope with it
  - Identifying problematic beliefs; finding and installing new, true, and useful beliefs
  - Being matter-of-fact, normalizing

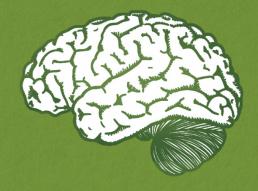
## Return to your Pods.

One person at a time, pick a block that is personally or professionally relevant.

As a group, discuss ways to help with it.

Then the next person, usually with a different block.

When it's your turn, you're in charge.



4

Helping Others to Install Beneficial Experiences

# The Importance of Installation

Without <u>installation</u> there is no learning, no change in the brain.

Activation without installation is pleasant, but has little lasting value.

The same research that proves therapy works shows no improvement in outcome over the last 30 or so years.

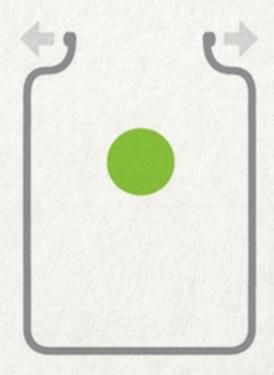
**Scott Miller** 



What fraction of your own beneficial mental states ever become neural structure?

What fraction of **your clients' or students'** beneficial mental states ever become neural structure?

## Skills with Enriching



**E**nrich It

## Factors of Enriching

- **Duration** 5+ seconds; protecting it; keeping it going
- Intensity opening to it in the mind; helping it get big
- Multimodality engaging multiple aspects of experience, especially perception and emotion
- Novelty seeing what is fresh; "don't know mind"
- Salience seeing why this is personally relevant

## What questions do you have about:

**Duration?** 

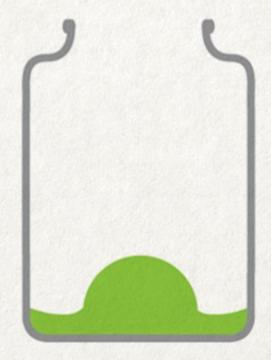
Intensity?

Multimodality?

Novelty?

Salience?

## Skills with Absorbing



Absorb It

## Two Aspects of Installation

## **Enriching**

Mind – big, rich, protected experience

**Brain** – intensifying and maintaining neural activity

## **Absorbing**

Mind – intending and sensing that the experience is received into oneself, with related rewards

**Brain** – priming, sensitizing, and promoting more effective encoding and consolidation

## Absorbing an Experience

- Intend, sense the experience is sinking into you.
  - Imagery Water into a sponge; golden dust sifting down; a jewel into the treasure chest of the heart
  - Sensation Warm soothing balm
- Give over to the experience; let it change you
- Let go of resisting, grasping, clinging: "craving"



Pick a partner and choose an A and B.

Once finished, find another partner and repeat.

### TIP:

If you're alone, reflect or journal.

- B: Tell your partner about an important beneficial experience for you.
- A: Take your partner through the first three steps of HEAL.
- B: Tell your partner what worked well in what they did.

Take it in! Then switch roles.

## Benefits of Positive Neuroplasticity [background]

## It's Good to Take in the Good

## Development of specific inner strengths

- General resilience, positive mood, feeling loved
- "Antidote experiences" Healing old wounds, filling the hole in the heart

## Implicit benefits:

- Shows that there is still good in the world
- Being active rather than passive
- Treating yourself kindly, like you matter
- Rights an unfair imbalance, given the negativity bias
- Training of attention and executive functions

## Sensitizes brain to positive: like Velcro for good

Keep a green bough in your heart, and a singing bird will come.

Lao Tzu



## Research on the HEAL Process

- With collaborators from the University of California, a 2013 study on the HEAL course, using a randomized waitlist control group design (46 subjects).
- Course participants, compared to the control group, reported more <u>Contentment</u>, <u>Self-Esteem</u>, <u>Savoring</u>, <u>Satisfaction with Life</u>, and <u>Gratitude</u>.
- After the course and at two month follow-up, pooled participants also reported more <u>Love</u>, <u>Compassion</u>, <u>Self-Compassion</u>, <u>Mindfulness</u>, <u>Self-Control</u>, <u>Positive</u> <u>Rumination</u>, <u>Joy</u>, <u>Amusement</u>, <u>Awe</u>, and <u>Happiness</u>, and <u>less Anxiety and Depression</u>.

### Combined Sample: Depression (BDI) & Anxiety (BAI)



## **Experience-Dependent Neuroplasticity** [background]



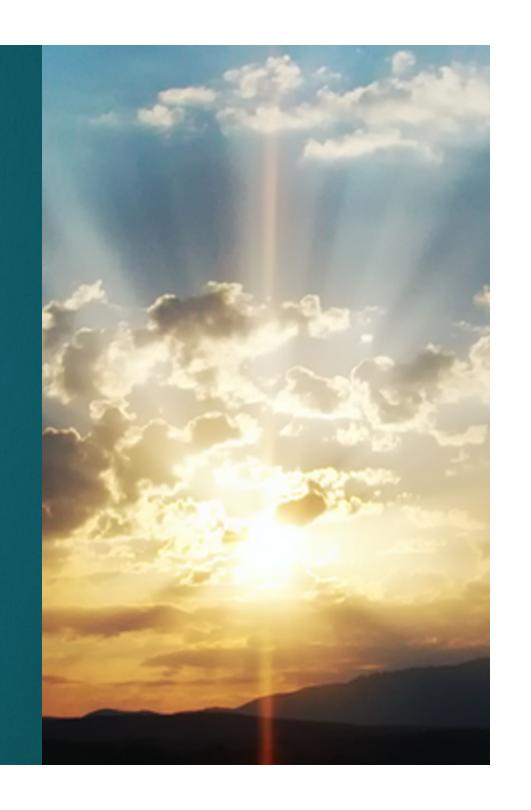
The brain is wider than the sky,

For, put them side by side,

The one the other will include

With ease, and you beside.

**Emily Dickinson** 



We ask, "What is a thought?"

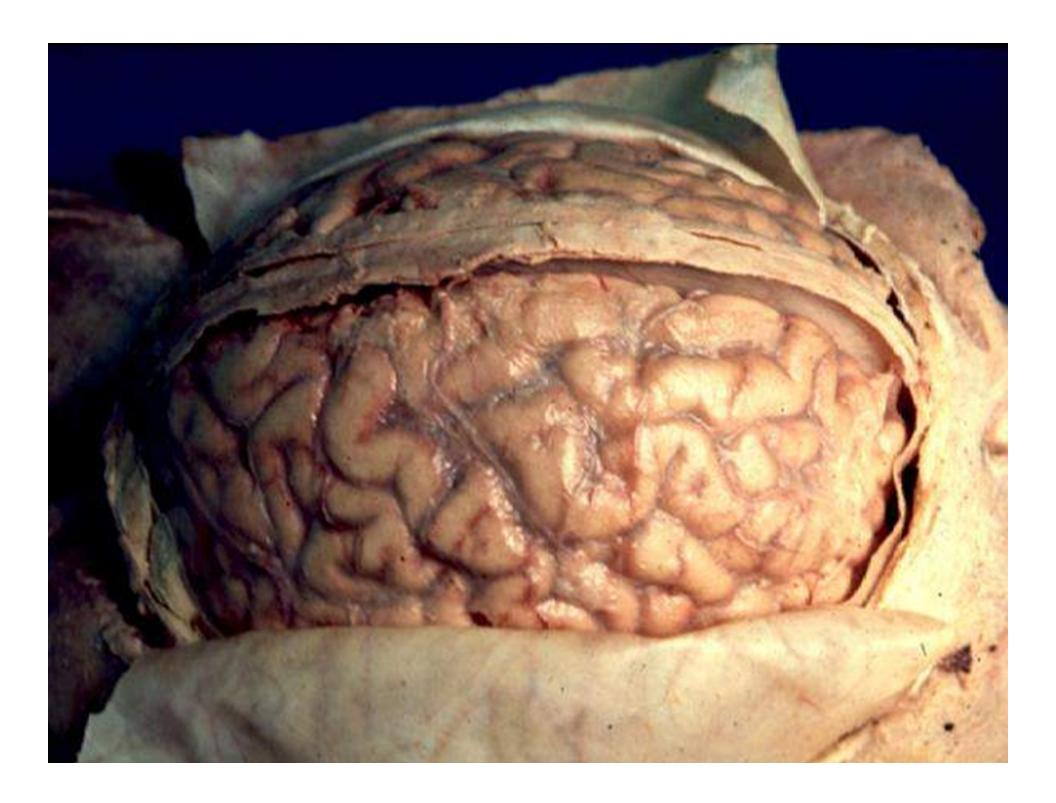
We don't know,

yet we are thinking continually.

Venerable Tenzin Palmo



# Second, the hardware.



## Your Brain: The Technical Specs

## Size:

- 3 pounds of tofu-like tissue
- 1.1 trillion brain cells
- 85 billion "gray matter" neurons

## **Activity:**

- Always on 24/7/365 Instant access to information on demand
- 20-25% of blood flow, oxygen, and glucose

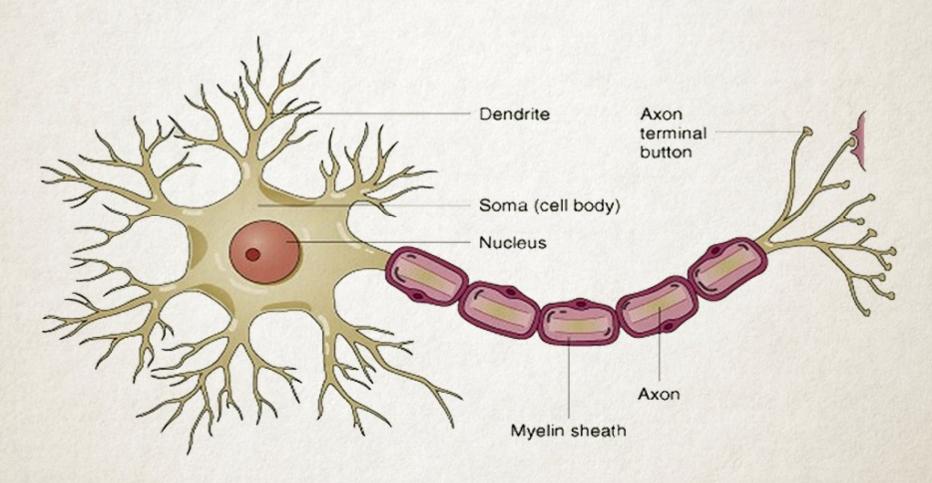
## Speed:

- Neurons firing around 5 to 50 times a second (or faster)
- Signals crossing your brain in a tenth of a second

## Connectivity:

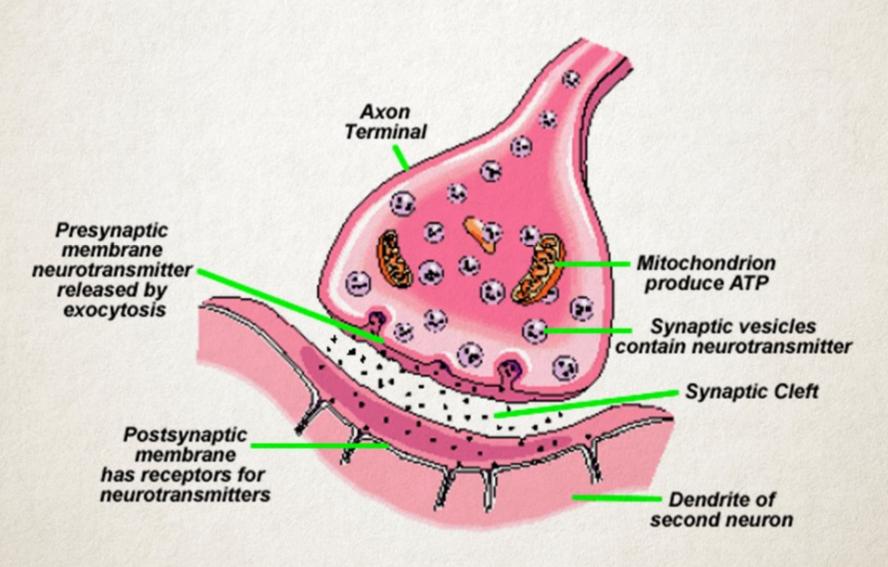
- Average neuron makes ~ 5000 connections with other neurons:
- ~ 500 <u>trillion</u> synapses

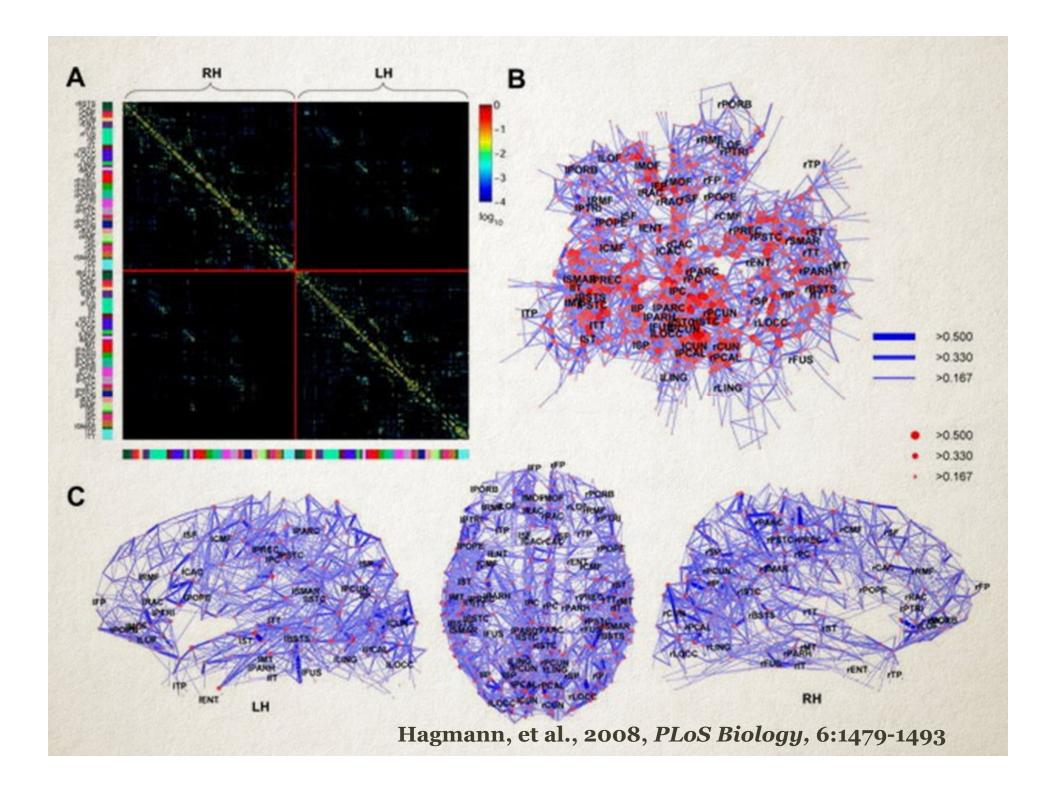
## A Neuron

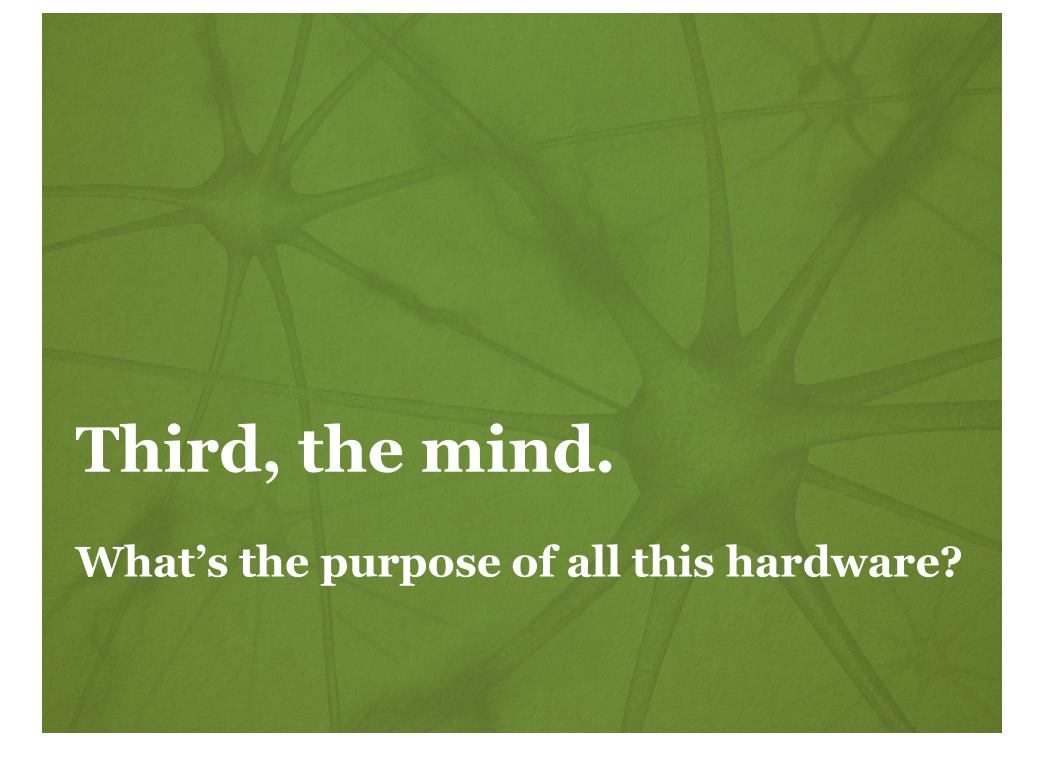


@ 2000 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

## A Synapse











All cells have specialized functions. Brain cells have particular ways of processing information and communicating with each other. Nerve cells form complete circuits that carry and transform information.

Electrical signaling represents the language of mind, the means whereby nerve cells, the building blocks of the brain, communicate with one another over great distances. Nerve cells generate electricity as a means of producing messages.

All animals have some form of mental life that reflects the architecture of their nervous system.

### Eric R. Kandel

## The Natural Mind

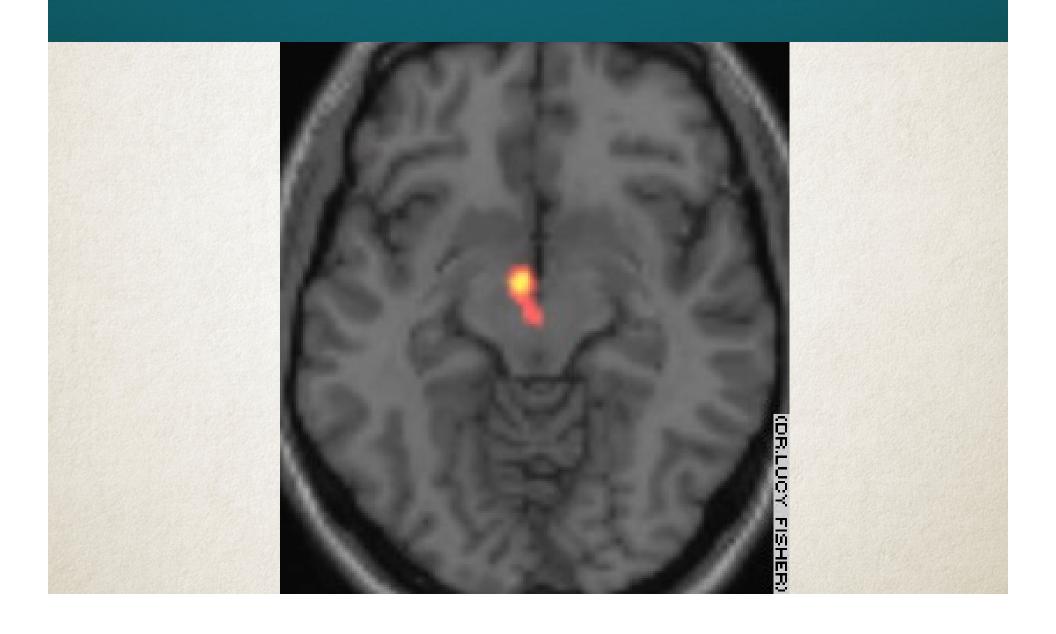
Apart from the hypothetical influence of a transcendental X factor . . .

Awareness and unconsciousness, mindfulness and delusion, and happiness and suffering must be <u>natural</u> processes.

Mind is grounded in life.

## Mental activity entails underlying neural activity.

## Rewards of Love



## Repeated mental activity entails repeated neural activity.

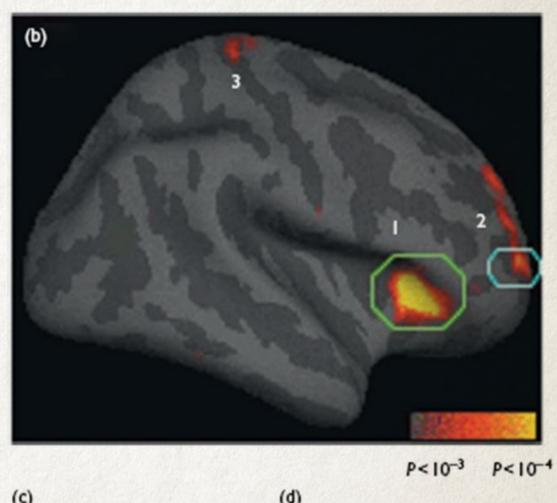
Repeated neural activity builds neural structure.

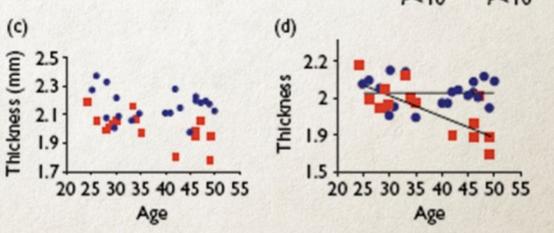


Lazar, et al. 2005.

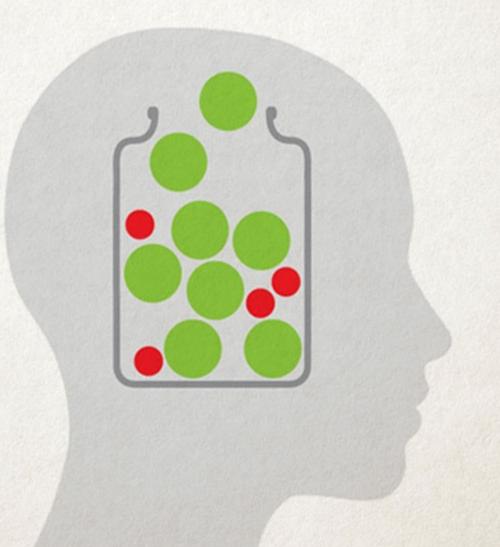
Meditation
experience is
associated
with increased
cortical
thickness.

Neuroreport, 16, 1893-1897.





## Inner Strengths Are Built From Brain Structure



We can use the mind To change the brain To change the mind for the better To benefit ourselves and other beings.

## The Negativity Bias

[background]

## Negative Experiences in Context

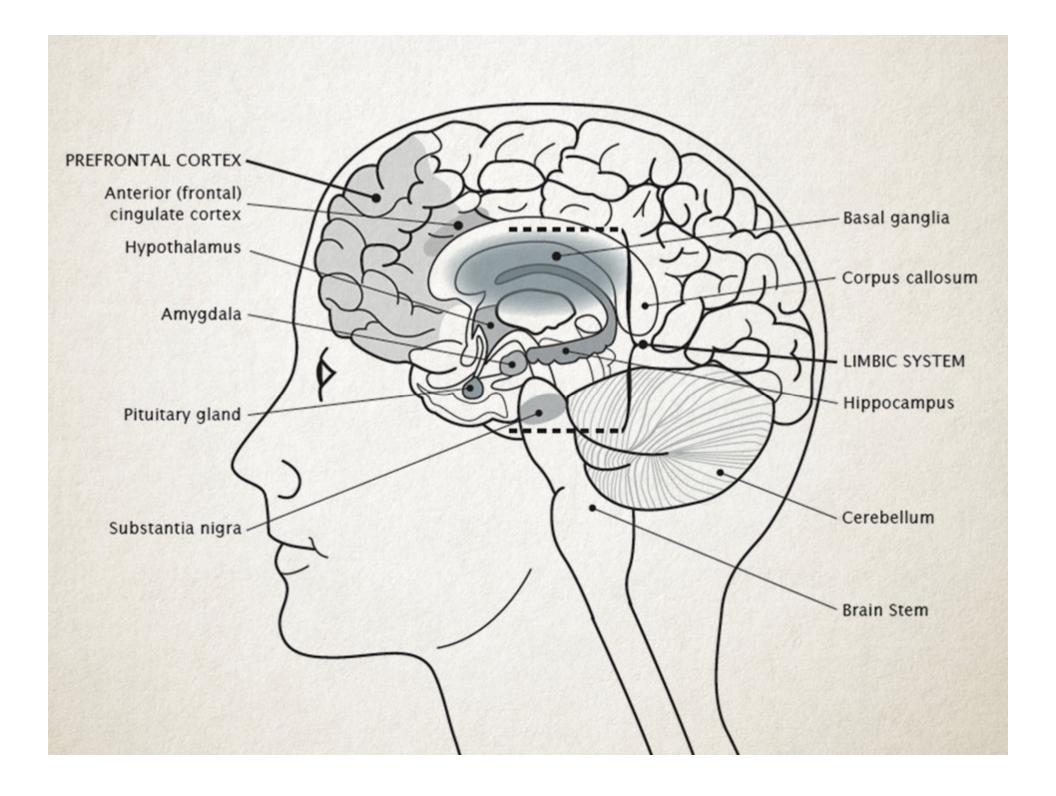
- Negative about negative → more negative
- Some inner strengths come only from negative experiences, e.g., "stress inoculation."
- But negative experiences have inherent costs, in discomfort and stress.
- Could an inner strength have been developed without the costs of negative experiences?
- Many negative experiences are pain with no gain.

## The Brain's Negativity Bias

As our ancestors evolved, "sticks" generally had more urgency and impact than "carrots."

As one major feature of the brain:

- 1. We scan for bad news.
- 2. Over-focus on it, losing sight of the whole
- 3. Over-react to it (e.g., brain, loss aversion)
- 4. Install it rapidly in implicit memory (e.g., negative interactions, learned helplessness)
- 5. Sensitize the brain to the negative
- 6. Create vicious cycles



The brain is good at learning from bad experiences but bad at learning from good ones.

Even though learning from good experiences is the primary way to grow psychological resources.

The installation of beneficial experiences is worth doing in its own right.

The negativity bias adds another reason: to compensate for our over-learning from the negative.

# Key Resource Experiences

We have three needs,
managed by three systems,
linked to three layers of the brain,
evolved in three stages.

The three systems have two settings.

One practice pulls us out of the red zone and deepens our roots in the green zone.

Any questions?!

## Resources for Avoiding Harms

## **Challenge**

Weakness

Helplessness

**Freezing** 

**Inflated threats** 

Alarm

**Tension** 

Dread

Confusion, overwhelm

Irritation, anger

## Resource

Strength

**Agency** 

Action, venting

Accurate appraisal

Protection, calming

Relaxation

Feeling alright now

Make a plan

Big picture, peace

## Resources for Approaching Rewards

## **Challenge**

What I don't have

Scarcity

Disappointed, sad

Frustration, failure

Bored, numb

Grief

Giving up

**Drivenness** 

## Resource

What I do have

**Enoughness** 

Gratitude, gladness

Accomplishment

Pleasure, excitement

Loved and loving

Aspire, lived by good

Already satisfied

#### Resources for Attaching to Others

#### **Challenge**

Left out, excluded
Inadequacy, shame
Ignored, unseen
Lonely
Resentment
Envy, jealousy

Feeling stifled

#### Resource

Belonging, wanted
Appreciated, respected
Receiving empathy
Friendship, caring
Recognize it hurts you
Self-compassion,
take action, good will
Skillful assertiveness

#### Questions for Identifying Resources

- What would have made all the difference in the world in your childhood, first job, last relationship, etc.? (Focus on the **experience** of state or trait that would have resulted from better relationships, settings, events.)
- What does your heart still long for?
- What's happening inside you when you are in a really good place?
- What's happening in the mind of someone you know who handles your issue well?

#### A Demonstration

- A volunteer? Briefly: what's the issue?
- I'll focus on resourcing.
- Potential key points:
  - Natural process of many choices along the way
  - Getting to the challenge as it's experienced
  - Identifying key resource(s); picking one(s) that is/are accessible
  - Slowing it down; encouraging embodiment
  - Linking when it feels right



Find a new partner, pick an A and B.

TIP:

If you're alone, reflect or journal.

A's guide B's: What is an internal issue? What is a key inner strength that could help? How could you have and take in experiences of it in your life?

A's guide B's through HEA steps for this strength.

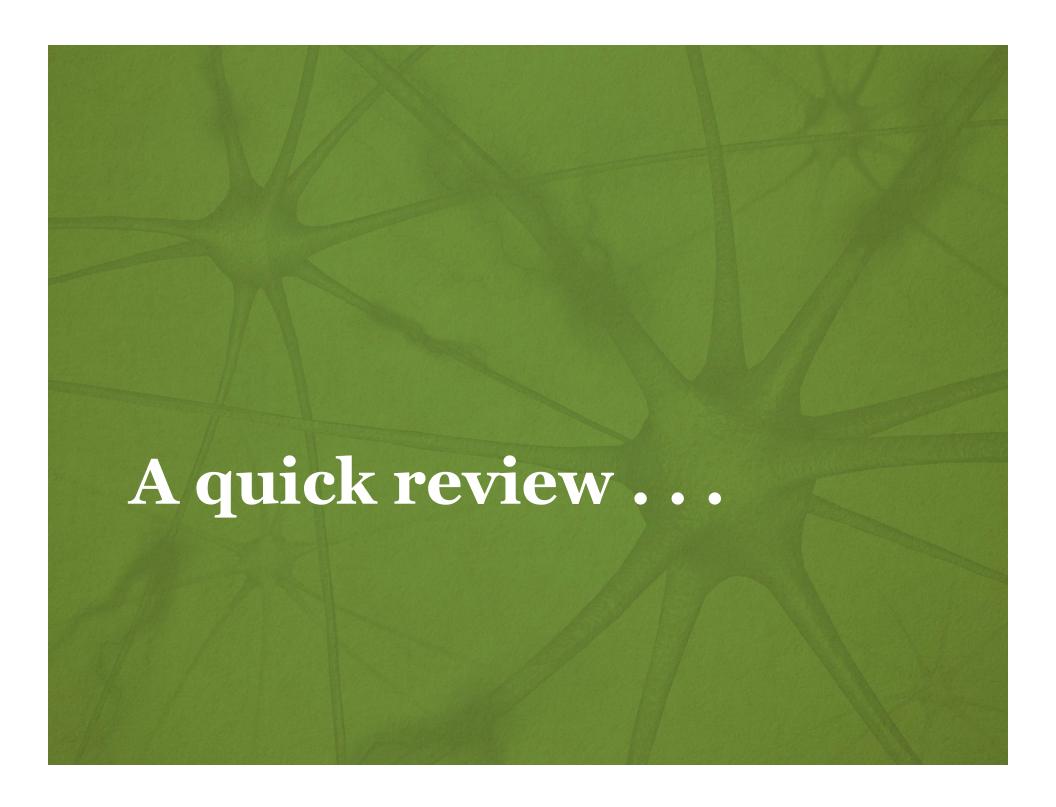
B's tell A's what worked.

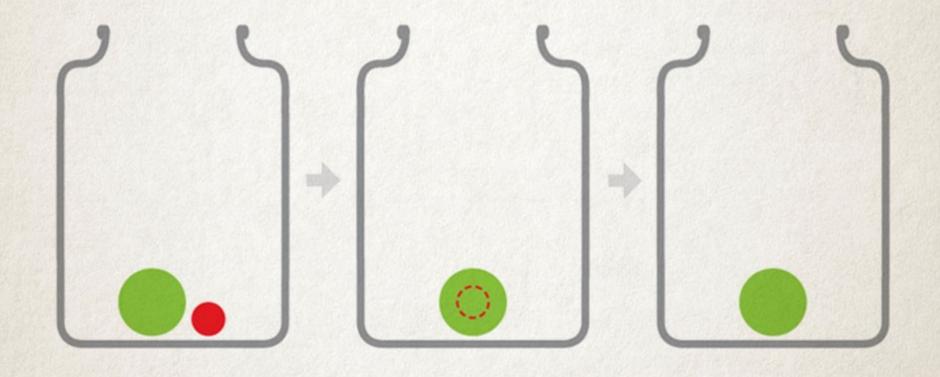


5

Using Positive Material to Address Negative Material

# Skills with "Linking"





Link Positive & Negative Material

### What is "negative material?"

Painful, harmful thoughts, perceptions, emotions, desires, and actions

Foreground of awareness

Background of awareness

Unconscious

# How Linking Works

- Activated negative material associates to whatever is also present in awareness.
- When negative material leaves awareness, these associations are reconsolidated in memory.
- This means that positive material can soothe, ease, put in perspective, and even replace negative material.
- Examples: pain held in spacious awareness; telling a friend about a problem; self-compassion for an upset; feeling cared about alongside feeling hurt

#### Conditions for the Link Step

- Divided awareness;
   holding two things at once
- Not hijacked by negative;
   if so, drop negative
- Positive material is more prominent in awareness.

# Degree of Engagement with Negative

- The idea of the negative material
- A <u>felt sense</u> of the negative material
- The positive material goes into the negative material

Throughout, the positive material remains more prominent in awareness.

# Skills with the 4<sup>th</sup> Step

- Be on your own side; you want the positive to win.
   Perhaps imagine inner allies with you.
- Be resourceful. It's OK to be creative, even playful.
- If the negative gets too strong, drop it; return to positive.
- Get a sense of receiving the positive into the negative.
- End with just the positive.
- Start with positive or negative material.



Find a new partner, pick an A and B.

#### TIP:

If you're alone, reflect or journal.

Role play one partner explaining to theother one: What is Linking and how to do it?

A's set up the roles, and begin.

B's tell A's what worked. Then say what was not so clear to you.



Same partner.

#### TIP:

If you're alone, reflect or journal.

Review the material about Linking. Then role play one partner explaining to the other one:

# What is Linking and how to do it?

A's set up the roles (they could be different from before), and begin.

B's tell A's what worked. Then say what was not so clear to you.



Same partner.
A's guide B's
explicitly through
HEAL, especially
Linking. Keep it
real.

#### TIP:

If you're alone, reflect or journal.

First, B's briefly describe the positive and negative (mild to moderate) material.

Then do HEAL as a direct guided practice, 5 min.

B's say what worked. And any suggestions.



Pick a new partner. Take turns, with one partner guiding the other one.

#### TIP:

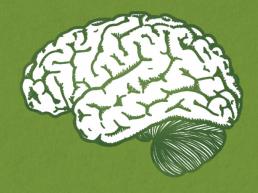
If you're alone, reflect or journal.

This is a longer, naturalistic exploration, 20 min. each way.

Try to get at key aspects of the negative material plus key mental resources that could help.

Do HEAL informally or formally along the way.

Debrief a few minutes. Switch Roles. How was that? What went well? What questions do you have?



6

Special Applications of The HEAL Process

# Using HEAL in Psychotherapy

These considerations for therapists will be useful for nearly anyone using HEAL with others.

# Implicit HEAL in Therapy

- Creating space for beneficial experiences
- Drawing attention to beneficial facts
- Encouraging positive experience of beneficial fact
- Drawing attention to key aspects of an experience
- Slowing the client down; not moving on
- Modeling taking in the good oneself

# Explicit HEAL in Therapy (1)

#### Teach the method

- Background helps about brain, negativity bias
- Emphasize facts and mild beneficial experiences.
- Surface blocks and work through them.
- Explain the idea of "risking the dreaded experience," noticing the (usually) good results, and taking them in.

# Explicit HEAL in Therapy (2)

- Do HEAL with client(s) during a session
  - Reinforcing key resource states and traits
  - Linking rewards to desired thoughts or actions
  - When learning from therapy has worked well
  - When realistic views of self and world come true
  - Good qualities in client
  - New insights
- Encourage HEAL between sessions
  - Naming occasions
  - Identifying key beneficial facts and experiences

# Promoting Client Motivation

- During therapy and between sessions, HEAL:
  - Key resource experiences
  - When learning from therapy works well
  - When realistic views of you, the world, etc. come true
  - Good qualities in yourself
  - New insights
- Can be formalized in daily reflections, journaling

#### HEAL and Trauma

#### General considerations:

- People vary in their resources and their traumas.
- Often the major action is with "failed protectors."
- Respect "yellow lights" and the client's pace.
- The first three steps of HEAL are generally safe. Use them to build resources for tackling the trauma directly.
- Use the Link step to address peripheral features and themes of the trauma.
- With care, use Link to get at the heart of the trauma.

# In Couples, Benefits of HEAL

- "Installs" key resources that support interactions (e.g., self-soothing, recognition of good intentions)
- Dampens vicious cycles
- Helps partner feel seen, credited for efforts
- Increases the sense of the good that is present
- Reduces clinginess, pursuing, or reproach that the other person withdraws from

# Using HEAL with a Couple

#### • Basic steps (often informal):

- Attention to a good fact
- Evoking and sustaining a good experience
- Managing blocks
- Awareness of the impact on one's partner
- Debriefing, often from both partners

#### Pitfalls to avoid:

- Seeming to side with one person
- Unwittingly helping a person overlook real issues
- Letting the other partner pile on



Pick a partner, choose A and B (A's go first).

Take turns talking about using HEAL with 2-3 different adults.

TIP: If you're alone, reflect or journal.

# Using HEAL with Children

#### Uses for Children

- Registering curricular skills and other resources
- Motivation for learning; associating rewards
- Seeing the good in the world, others, and oneself – and in the past, present, and future
- Seeing life as opportunity
- Feeling like an active learner
- Developing child-specific inner strengths

### Adaptations for Children

- Kids gain from HEAL particularly mistreated, anxious, spirited/ ADHD, or LD children.
- Style:
  - Be matter of fact: this is mental/neural literacy.
  - A little brain talk goes a long way.
  - Be motivating: name benefits; "be the boss of your own mind."
  - Down to earth, naturalistic
  - Scaffold based on executive functions, motivation, and need for autonomy.
  - Brief, concrete

#### Occasions for HEAL with Kids

- Explicit training in positive neuroplasticity
- Natural rhythms in the day (e.g., start of class, after a lesson or recess, end of day)
- When working with an individual child
- When dealing with classroom issues



Pick a partner and choose A and B (A's go first).

TIP: If you're alone, reflect or journal.

Take turns talking about using HEAL with children.

If HEAL with kids is not relevant for you, just talk about how you could use it with adults.

# Wrapping Up

#### Return to your Pods.

One person at a time (~5 min. each):

# What did you get out of this training personally?

What are some ways you hope to apply what you've learned here?

# Societal Implications of Positive Neuroplasticity

- For most of the time our human and hominid ancestors have lived, it was not possible to meet the core needs of everyone. But now the resources and know-how exist to do this. How we handle this unprecedented opportunity will be the central theme of this century.
- Improving external conditions is vital but not enough. Many affluent people dwell in anxiety and anger, frustration and drivenness, and hurt and ill will.
- Repeatedly internalizing Responsive experiences develops a "green brain" that is harder to manipulate with threats and fear, greed and consumerism, and "us" vs. "them" rivalries. A critical mass of "green brains" will bring a tipping point that changes the course of human history.

# Coming Home

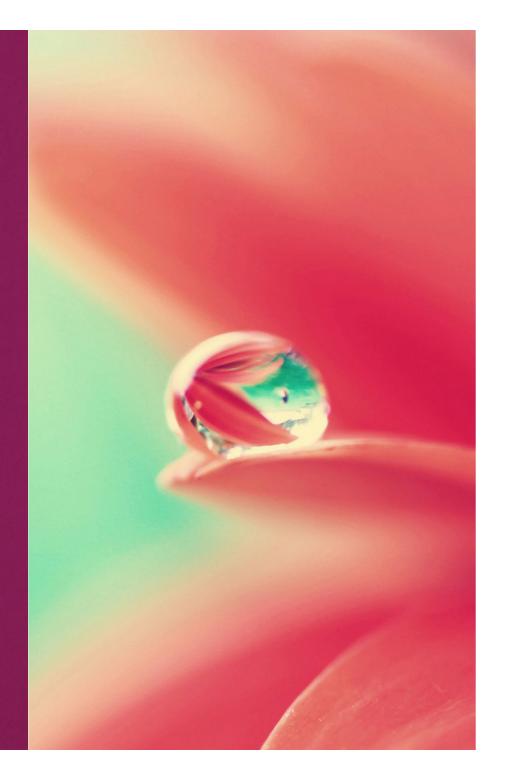
# Peace Contentment Love

Think not lightly of good, saying, "It will not come to me."

Drop by drop is the water pot filled.

Likewise, the wise one, Gathering it little by little, Fills oneself with good.

Dhammapada 9.122



# Suggested Books

#### See RickHanson.net for other great books.

- Austin, J. 2009. Selfless Insight. MIT Press.
- Begley. S. 2007. Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain. Ballantine.
- Carter, C. 2010. Raising Happiness. Ballantine.
- Hanson, R. (with R. Mendius). 2009. Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, and Wisdom. New Harbinger.
- Johnson, S. 2005. Mind Wide Open. Scribner.
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- Sapolsky, R. 2004. Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers. Holt.
- Siegel, D. 2007. The Mindful Brain. Norton.
- Thompson, E. 2007. Mind in Life. Belknap.

#### See RickHanson.net for other scientific papers.

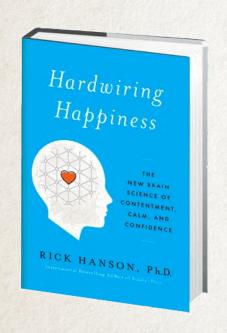
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#### Where to Find Rick Hanson Online



#### Hardwiring Happiness:

The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence

www.rickhanson.net/hardwiringhappiness

Personal website: www.rickhanson.net

Wellspring Institute: www.wisebrain.org



