

The Wise Brain Bulletin

News and Tools for Happiness, Love, and Wisdom

Volume 3, 2 (2/28/09)

Featured Article:

Nurturing Mothers, Too

© By Rick Hanson, Ph.D. and Jan Hanson, L.Ac.

Motherhood is a premiere example of the mind/brain/body/relationships/world interdependence. Since three in four women will have a baby, we thought this article would have general interest, which first appeared in the March/April issue of New Beginnings, the magazine of the LaLeche League.

One Mother's Story

A year after Susan's second child was born (identifying details have been changed), she met with Jan because she wanted an "energy boost." She was thirty-six, dark-haired, and slender, with a no-nonsense gaze, and she worked part-time as a bookkeeper for a department store.

She showed photos of her children, melting in a soft smile. Alana was three, "really smart but

feisty!" Brian, the baby, had been colicky for many months, and even though he was now sleeping through the night, she had frequent insomnia. Susan had breastfed Alana for most of two years, and she loved nursing Brian, too. Jan described nursing our son for four years and his sister for two, including during her pregnancy and in tandem for a year-and-a-half.

Susan's husband (a term used here interchangeably with "spouse," "partner," and "mate"), Marco, was sometimes helpful when he was home, but he worked long hours and said he needed to rest for his job. She paused and then said carefully, "We've argued a lot about him helping more, but he just says he's doing better than his dad. But it's irritating and I'm so tired at night that I don't feel very affectionate, which is a problem for him." Jan asked how Susan was feeling personally. Susan

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Greetings

The Wise Brain Bulletin offers skillful means from brain science and contemplative practice—to nurture your brain for the benefit of yourself and everyone you touch.

The Bulletin is offered freely, and you are welcome to share it with others. Past issues are archived at www.WiseBrain.org.

Rick Hanson, PhD and Richard Mendius, MD edit the Bulletin, and it's designed and laid out by Brad Reynolds at BradleyYes@aol.com.

To subscribe, please contact Rick at drh@comcast.net.

healthier, and happier with my husband.” (You can read about Jan’s story in our book, *Mother Nurture: A Mother’s Guide to Health in Body, Mind, and Intimate Relationships* [Penguin, 2002].)

But, Step #1, Your Own Needs Have to Matter, Too

“How’d you do it?” Susan asked.

Jan reflected for a moment. “First and foremost, I realized I needed nurturing, too.”

“But isn’t that kind of selfish?”

“Not at all,” Jan replied. “It’s a plain fact: You have to keep refilling your own cup in order to pour into your kids – let alone have anything left over for your husband or yourself.”

Jan told Susan about the little exercise that’s in the box, and Susan started smiling to herself as she began thinking about her own lists.

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replied, “Well, I don’t want to complain. As my mother-in-law says, ‘That’s just motherhood, get used to it.’ The other moms, they look all put together, like it’s going fine, so I feel it’s my fault.”

It’s Going to Be OK

Jan said, “Susan, I felt much the same way. It has been wonderful to be a mom, the best, most important thing I’ve ever done. But there’s SO much work, and many days you’re putting out more than is coming back in.

“I know!” Susan burst out, “Some days I feel like I’m running on fumes.”

“Me, too,” Jan said. “Many mothers feel like that. But there’s a kind of taboo about really talking about it, which just makes us feel guilty or mad at ourselves. And that’s not fair.”

Jan went on: “It will definitely get better. You’re meant to have babies and nurse them. That’s how women evolved over millions of years; motherhood is perfectly natural, not some kind of medical condition! And time is on your side, as your children get more able to do things for themselves.

“Plus, you can always take better care of yourself. I did, and that’s how I ended up feeling less stressed,

You Matter, Too

Take three pieces of paper. Put this title at the top of each page: “The Benefits of Improving My Health, Well-Being, and Relationship.” Under that title, put the words, “To My Children” on the first page, “To My Relationship” on the second page, and “To Me” on the third page. Then take a few minutes to write down a list of benefits on each page. If you like, ask a friend or even your partner for some ideas. When you’re done, sit back and let it sink in.

Jan continued: “Second, I learned about the potential effects of motherhood on a woman’s mind, body, and marriage. A few people frowned on that—including my own mother-in-law!—but it honors moms to tell the truth about all the ways that parenthood has affected them. (References for statements in this article can be found on our website, www.NurtureMom.com.)

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"Third, Rick and I took some concrete actions. Most were real simple, like eating protein with every meal or pinning down who did what with the kids or housework.

"So it was just three steps. And they really paid off! Which helped me enjoy more this precious time with kids, feel a lot better, and not worry about my marriage." Jan leaned forward a little and said, "And you can do it, too!"

Step #2: Understanding the Two Sides of Parenthood

Susan had already started on the first step - realizing that she mattered, too - and over the next few weeks, Jan helped her take the other two.

Susan realized immediately that it was hopeful and positive to understand both sides of parenthood, since it helped her (A) make sense out of things, (B) zero in on solutions, (C) and have solid information for her partner to explain why she needed more help. Below, we've summarized the information Jan gave her. To cover most mothers, it contains a wide range of possibilities, so just see what fits for you.

A Word about Fathers

Parenthood definitely affects men, as Rick (a very involved dad) can testify! But (unless there's an adoption) women alone experience pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and weaning. Most moms handle the great majority of the childrearing and housework. And many a mother is raising her children pretty much by herself. It doesn't put down fathers to focus on mothers.

Growing Demands upon You

A mother is affected by the combination of the *demands* upon her, her *resources* (inside and outside her), and any *vulnerabilities*.

The physical demands start with conception, when she starts building the most complex

organ the body ever grows. It takes about 80,000 extra calories to make a baby, and lots of specialized nutrients. Pregnancy and childbirth also cause major gyrations in the hormonal and immune systems.

When a mom breastfeeds (which we highly recommend!!), she uses about a quarter of her total caloric intake for nursing, and she also needs to replenish the nutrients that breastmilk is full of, like essential fatty acids.

And there is all the work involved in raising a family, much of which is, let's face it, quite stressful, from worrying about a baby's illness to figuring out how to pay for college - with all the hassles in between, like quarrels with your partner, which one study found were eight times as frequent after children.

No surprise, studies have shown that mothers are more stressed than fathers or women not raising children. Chronic stress is more than an unpleasant experience, as it relentlessly disturbs your gastrointestinal, nervous, endocrine, and immune systems.



Alas, Shrinking Resources

So, when all these perfectly natural demands landed on your doorstep, did your resources increase to handle them?

For most mothers, the answer is a firm "No."

Physically, moms get less sleep especially during the baby's first year, and the sleep they do get is more interrupted and thus less restorative. Good

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nutrition is usually out the window; a study showed that mothers of young children commonly eat just two meals a day - and many stop taking the vitamins they dutifully consumed during pregnancy. Exercise typically drops as well; who's got time for it?

Psychologically, there's simply less time for respite and renewal. And some stay-at-home moms feel (unfairly) a loss of worth in no longer working for pay.

Socially, the so-called "village it takes to raise a child" frequently looks more like a ghost town. Meanwhile, researchers have found that the average mother is working away about 20 hours a week more than her partner is, whether or not she's also drawing a paycheck. There's also less couple time after "baby makes three," especially the caring conversation women long for.

Unavoidable Personal Vulnerabilities

All this gets at you right where you're most vulnerable, like germs in dishwater slipping through a small cut on your hand to cause an infection. See if any of these common vulnerabilities apply to you:

- Family history of autoimmune illness, depression, hormonal irregularities, etc
- Nutritional deficiencies (9 in 10 women do not consume all the USDA-recommended vitamins and minerals before their first pregnancy)
- Mental or physical health problems before parenthood
- Having children past age 30
- A temperament that is highly sensitive or reactive
- A difficult pregnancy or childbirth
- Postpartum depression (PPD)

Vulnerabilities can also exist within a relationship, such as divergent views about how to raise children, or significant religious differences. These can matter very little . . . until children come along.



Naturally Enough, Some Consequences

Ask yourself a simple question: *How has having children affected my body, mind, and marriage?*

Of course, most of those effects have been really wonderful. But also see if any of these not-so-good consequences also applies to you—which will help you start making them better:

- **Body**—Studies have found widespread shortages of key nutrients among mothers - the vital building blocks of bones, hormones, and neurotransmitters. Many women who seemingly have only psychological or marital concerns —e.g., irritability, blue mood, no libido—are actually physically depleted, which you can see through medical lab testing.

This depletion is a major reason why researchers have found that motherhood increases a woman's general risks for health issues, as well as more intense PMS, fatigue, nutritional deficits, Type II diabetes, and autoimmune illnesses.

- **Mind**—Many mothers feel pulled in too many directions with too many tasks. Half the mothers of infants report significant depressive symptoms, and anxiety reactions to child illnesses or injuries are common. And there's plain old feeling stressed-out.
- **Marriage** - Conflicts usually increase dramatically after having children, both about how to raise them and how to share the load fairly. Each parent has grievances, whether it's him grumbling about the lack of sex or

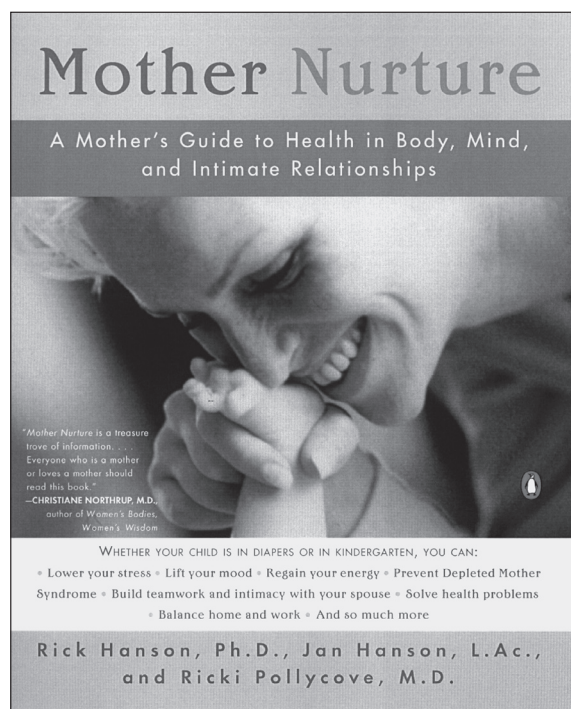
her feeling let down. On average, marital satisfaction drops substantially after parenthood—especially for mothers.

Step #3: Taking Good Care of a Mother

Well, that's the end of the bad news - but just seeing how normal it is can help you feel better. And by identifying the specific factors at work in your own life, you can focus on what will do the most good, whether it's lowering one of the demands upon you, or increasing a key resource, or shoring up a vulnerability.

There's always something that can be done to support you—whether you're doing it or someone else is. It could be as small as getting your husband to do the weekend dishes, or finding another mom for a daily walk. Little things truly add up over time, with snowballing *positive* cycles.

The suggestions below are common-sense methods systematically applied to a mother - a kind of toolkit you can pick from. We'll describe them briefly; for more information, please see our book, *Mother Nurture* (See www.mothernurture.com).



Many moms tune out their body, but it's your friend! - and you have to take good care of it to keep going year after year during the long marathon of motherhood. Here's a sensible prescription:

- **Eat well**—Get protein with every meal and lots of fresh vegetables; generally aim for whole foods as close to their natural state as possible. Eat organic when you can, to reduce the impact of toxins on your vulnerable body—and breastmilk.

Minimize sugar (especially sweetened drinks) and refined flour (which converts to sugars quickly in the body); since motherhood already increases risks for Type II diabetes, it's best to avoid the additional risks from sugar and refined flour. Think about the foods you might be sensitive or allergic to; the most common ones are the gluten grains and milk products introduced into the human diet just 10,000 years ago, an eyeblink on the evolutionary time scale. And try to avoid packaged foods and saturated fats.

- **Take high-quality supplements**—Either continue your prenats or get a good brand from a health food store. To get all the minerals you need, you'll just have to take a few pills since putting all those minerals in one pill would make it the size of a golf ball.

Add essential fatty acids (the “good fats”), preferably through taking enough “molecularly distilled” fish oil to get 250-500 milligrams (mg)/day of DHA. (Unfortunately, these days eating enough fish to get all the good fats you need would expose you to high levels of mercury toxins.) If you're a vegetarian, your best alternative is to take a tablespoon a day of uncooked flax oil along with a DHA supplement (from algae) made by Neuromin.

Take 500 mg of taurine in the morning before breakfast, a soothing and balancing amino acid that is particularly consumed by breastfeeding.

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Take a B-complex pill for supporting your mood, energy, and heart health.

All this will cost you about a dollar a day, no more, can't possibly hurt you, will take less time than brushing your teeth,

- **Make sleep a top priority**—Ask your mate for lots of help at night; unless he works in an ER or something like that, studies show that your job as a mother is more stressful than his . . . and raising precious children is, honestly, probably more important - so you need rest at least as much as he does! During the day, nap when the baby does and hang the housework.
- **Exercise several times a week**—You could push your child vigorously in a stroller, join a gym with good child care, or hook up with moms who go on regular walks. Check out programs like Baby Boot Camp for structured support.
- **Get a sophisticated check-up if you don't feel well**—Ask about refined laboratory testing of your nutrition (amino acids, minerals, B-vitamins) and hormones (thyroid, cortisol, DHEA, FSH, estrogen, etc.). Use a licensed health practitioner who encourages breastfeeding, takes the time to study your results, and will really talk with you. That might be your family doctor or gynecologist, but unfortunately many mothers have had the experience of being told they're just fine and that their sense of just not feeling right in their own body is "in their head" - so be sure to go to someone supportive.

In Susan's case, she had several conditions fairly common among mothers:

1. Low vitamin B6, critical for producing serotonin, a neurotransmitter that helps lift your mood and regulate your digestion—Jan had her take 50 mg/day in B-6's activated form, called pyridoxal 5-phosphate (P-5-P).
2. Low magnesium, essential for sleep—Susan took about 500 mg/day of magnesium glycinate, and her insomnia almost disappeared.
3. Thyroid at the bottom of the normal range—Since Susan had symptoms of low thyroid

—including fatigue, dry skin, and constipation—Jan referred her to a wise, holistic physician who gave her thyroid hormone and carefully monitored her blood levels.

Your Mind

Martin Mull once joked: "Having a family is like having a bowling alley installed in your brain." Here's how to reduce some of the banging and clatter:

- **Remember that YOU matter**—Your children need you to take good care of yourself, plus you have a right to enjoy this special time. As they say on an airplane, "Put your own oxygen mask on first."
- **Keep the needle of your stress meter out of the "red zone"**—Make stress relief part of daily life, rather than saving it up for a vacation. Do little things every hour or so, like splashing water on your face or taking a deep breath, and they'll make a big difference. (Please see the box, "Instant Stress Relief," for more ideas.)
- **Take in good experiences**—Notice the sweet moments, savor them, and let them sink in. This is a vital way to build up positive emotional memories - the foundation of a good mood and a great resources for handling stress. You've earned these experiences - so take the time to enjoy them.
- **Do something routinely that's calming and restorative**—Like walking the dog, reading inspirational literature, playing music, meditating or praying, doing an art or craft, or yoga.
- **Reach out to other mothers**—During most human history, a mother would spend her day mainly with other moms and their kids. That's Mother Nature's plan - and studies have shown that women get a special protection against stress through being with each other. So join a mom's club, look around for a buddy, help out at preschool, etc., etc.

Instant Stress Relief

Here's a list of suggestions, and we invite you to add your own favorites. Many take less than a minute, so you can always find time for stress relief!

- Take four long, slow breaths; as you exhale, imagine that a gray cloud of bad feelings is leaving; as you inhale, imagine that peace and love and wisdom are filling you up.
- Splash water on your face.
- While standing, bend over to touch the floor, shake your arms loosely, and straighten up slowly as you take in a big breath.
- Remember a good joke.
- Repeat a favorite saying or prayer to yourself.
- Make a cup of tea.
- Lie down, close your eyes, and imagine a warm, golden balm settling over you, gently soothing any distress.
- Ask someone for a compliment.
- Watch the sunlight on leaves, or the moon and the stars.
- Go for a short walk and look for beauty.
- Arrange flowers in a vase.
- Be especially loving with someone.
- Read a gossip magazine
- Take a bath.
- Call a friend and really talk.
- Visit your church or temple.
- Browse through a bookstore.
- Provide a simple charitable service to someone in more need than you.

Your Relationship

Because of the erosion of community support in the past couple of generations, it's more important than ever for parents to be on the same page, share the load fairly, and sustain an intimate friendship. There's no perfect guarantee, especially if things have grown rocky, but here's a best-odds strategy:

- **Start with the "80-20 rule"**—As hard as it might be, try to put 80% of your attention on what you can do to make your relationship better, and just 20% on what your partner can do. That will reduce finger-pointing and break deadlocks in which each person is waiting for the other one to make the first move. And it will make you feel good about yourself, and it's likely to encourage your mate to be more supportive.
- **Keep a civil tongue**—Try to speak accurately and constructively, and ask your partner to do the same. Stay on topic all the way to the end rather than bouncing around. Take a time-out if things get heated; call a woman's shelter or the police if there is any threat of violence.
- **Share your experience**—People can argue all day about some event or what to do, but no one can contradict how you feel: it's just the way it is. And the more deeply and vulnerably you say how it is for you (as long as it's safe to do so), the more likely you are to get openness and caring from your spouse.
- **Translate mom-speak and dad-speak**—Women tend to focus on feelings, the sense of connection, and process, while men tend to be about thoughts, actions, and outcomes.

Neither one is better, and it's good to be skillful with each style. Make it clear when you're having a let's-connect conversation and when it's about solving problems and making decisions. Keep the other person's style in mind, especially if there's a misunderstanding.

- **Emphasize empathy**—Empathy means understanding the inner world of the other person, not necessarily agreement. Try to look past the surface layers to the deeper wants and hurts in each other. Say back (with respect) what you think might be the case, and see if it's true. As a regular matter, try asking three questions in a row about the inner thoughts, feelings, and desires of each other.
- **Name the facts seriously**—It's a fact found in research that kids do best when their dad is really involved with them and helpful around the home. It's another fact that most mothers need a sense of teamwork to be erotically interested; as one mom put it, "Foreplay starts in the morning when he helps make lunches." If you're arguing about something, pin down the facts first; for example, track for a few days how you each spend your time and share the load: it's always eye-opening. As you speak the truth of things, you're entitled to be grave and real, not shrill or whiny.
- **Make agreements**—Focus on solutions instead of just re-hashing your case - or defending against his. One issue at a time, negotiate a concrete plan, and stick with it. Ask yourselves if you really want to solve problems - or just argue over who's right. If your partner will not keep his promises, consider involving a third party like a minister or therapist.
- **Make time for your relationship**—If you don't keep pouring energy back into your relationship, it could run out of gas, too. Do some childrearing or housework tasks together rather than always "dividing to

conquer." Insist that kids (two or older) leave you alone for fifteen minutes so you can talk. Have a regular date night. Try to go to bed at the same time.

- Be intimate friends, not just co-parents – Build daily, non-sexual affection into your relationship. On a foundation of communication and teamwork, try to find a rhythm of regular lovemaking that feels good for each of you; it's OK if it's less spontaneous or sometimes just a quickie. Let yourself be nurtured by the love you feel for each other —partners in the profound undertaking of raising precious children.

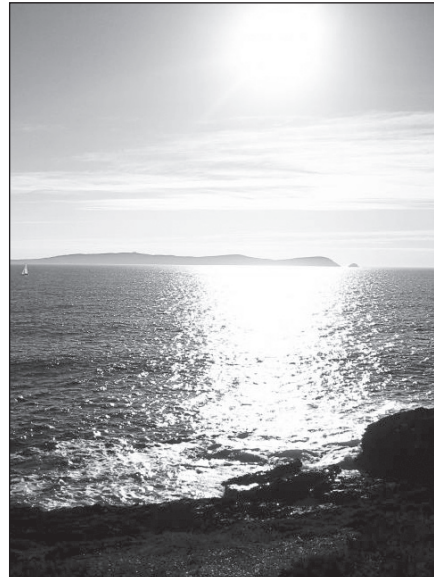
In Conclusion

It made Susan feel immediately better to realize that her low energy, blue mood, and sense of distance from her husband had been due to objective causes, so they no longer seemed like a personal failing. And within a few weeks, the three steps she took had begun making a dramatic difference. In her final appointment, Susan smiled when she told Jan, *"Now when I push my gas pedal, there's something in the tank."*



Author Bio

Jan Hanson, M.S., L.Ac., is an acupuncturist and specialist in clinical nutrition whose private practice focuses on women's health and temperament issues in children. She is co-author of *Mother Nurture: A Mother's Guide to Health in Body, Mind, and Intimate Relationships* (Penguin, 2002). While working at the Neurochemistry Research Laboratory at the Veteran's Hospital in Sepulveda, California, she co-authored a research paper when she was 18 years old. She went on to receive a B.A. from UCLA and an M.S. from the Academy of Chinese Culture and Health Sciences.



Perspectives on Self-Care

Be careful with all self-help methods (including those presented in this Bulletin), which are no substitute for working with a licensed healthcare practitioner. People vary, and what works for someone else may not be a good fit for you. When you try something, start slowly and carefully, and stop immediately if it feels bad or makes things worse.



Words of Wisdom

Your True Nature

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

~World Health Organization

O Child of Buddha Nature

~The traditional form of address in the Tibetan Book of the Dead to the dying or dead person

Luminous is the mind, brightly shining is its nature, but it is colored by the attachments that visit it.

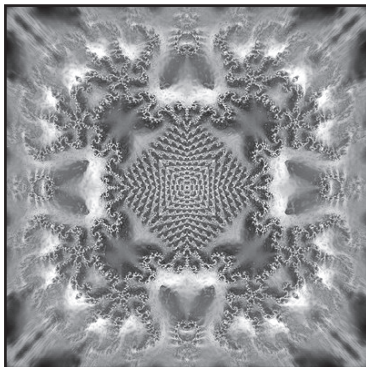
~Anguttara Nikaya 1.49-51

Happiness is a sunbeam which may pass through a thousand bosoms without losing a particle of its original ray.

~Jane Porter

Develop a mind that is vast like space, where experiences both pleasant and unpleasant can appear and disappear without conflict, struggle, or harm.

~Majjhima Nikaya



We can notice the distinction between consciousness and all the transient states and experiences that arise and pass away within it. When we do not understand this point, we take each of the passing states to be real. But when changing conditions such as happiness and unhappiness are seen for what they are, we find the way to peace. If you can rest in the knowing, the pure consciousness, there's not much more to do.

Ajahn Mun

Q: What do you mean by saying that you are beyond space and time?

A: My Guru showed me my true nature — and the true nature of the world. Having realized that I am one with, and yet beyond the world, I became free from all desire and fear. I did not reason out that I should be free — I found myself free — unexpectedly, without the least effort. This freedom from desire and fear remained, with me since then. Another thing I noticed was that I do not need to make an effort; the deed follows the thought, without delay and friction. I have also found that thoughts become self-fulfilling; things would fall in place smoothly and rightly. The main change was in the mind; it became motionless and silent, responding quickly, but not perpetuating the response. Spontaneity became a way of life, the real became natural and the natural became real. And above all, infinite affection, love, dark and quiet, radiating in all directions, embracing all, making all interesting and beautiful, significant and auspicious.

~Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Let your own experience serve as your guide and inspiration. Let yourself enjoy the view as you travel along the path. The view is your own mind, and because your mind is already enlightened, if you take the opportunity to rest awhile along the journey, eventually you'll realize that the place you want to reach is the place you already are.

~Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche

The Buddha taught that the mind has no substance; it isn't anything. The mind isn't born belonging to anyone, and it doesn't die belonging to anyone. The mind is free, radiant, and unentangled with any problems or issues. The reason the problems arise is because the mind is deluded by conditioned things, deluded by this misperception of self.

~Ajahn Chah

Accept yourself – and reject your self.

~Nanananda

WHAT CAN I SAY!!

~Swami Beyondananda



San Rafael Meditation Group

Open to beginners and experienced practitioners, we meet on Wednesday evenings at the A Sante day spa in downtown San Rafael at the corner of Brooks and 3rd. "Early-bird" meditation starts at 6:45 with formal instruction at 7:00; meditation ends at 7:30, followed by a brief break, and then a dharma talk and discussion, ending at 8:30. It is led by Rick Hanson, and for more information, check out www.WiseBrain.org/sanrafaelmeditation.html. Newcomers are always welcome!



Grateful Wonder

The theme of this collection of videos is “going for it” – which includes inspiration, enthusiasm, and taking chances. And as the last video shows, recognizing your true nature gives a solid platform from which to leap.

- Chris Sharma (hands-down the world’s best rock climber, and a meditator) on Dreamtime, 5.14d www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlcQ3mxlNfs
- Paul Simon and Miriam Makeba, singing “Under African Skies” in Africa www.youtube.com/watch?v=MB26L8nbRiw
- “The Last Lecture,” Randy Pausch, Carnegie-Mellon; given after receiving a diagnosis of terminal cancer. Absolutely incredible and inspiring. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo
- Connie Talbot, 6 years old, singing “Somewhere over the Rainbow,” blowing away Simon Kalb www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWN0iVrJDsE
- Eye-popping ping-pong www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrp-FT51zPE
- Surfing a sixty foot wave www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuw_W0SgIkQ
- “Coming Home to Happiness,” Rick Hanson at Awakening Joy, November, 2008; starts about a minute in. <http://blip.tv/file/1511580>

Offerings

Rick Hanson, PhD, and Rick Mendius, MD

1. Sounds True offers *Meditations for Happiness* by Rick Hanson, Ph.D. It's 3 CD's worth of talks and brain-savvy exercises for increasing your happiness, with an emphasis on experiential practices and practical tools. It is offered as an inexpensive download to your computer, where you can listen to it or burn it to CD's or transfer it to an iPod.

This program truly turned out to be pretty great, and here's a comment about it from the author, Annie Spiegelman:

"On his new "Meditations for Happiness" program, benevolent Rick Hanson guides me to sit down and face my inner critic—and then actually see it as a form and shrink it. Being a Master Gardener, I see the critic as a gnome who tiptoes into my brain when no one is looking, with those tiny pointy shoes, and makes me doubt myself. I shrink him down to the size of a snail and toss him out. He knows nothing. The shoes are a dead giveaway."

Here's the link to this program at Sounds True: <http://shop.soundstrue.com/shop.soundstrue.com/SelectProd.do;jsessionid=AA644B8B2BA5A2526E297913DE0434AD?prodId=1715&manufacturer=Sounds%20True&category=Exploring%20the%20Psyche&name=Meditations%20for%20Happiness>

2. Rick also has a chapter, "7 Facts about the Brain That Incline the Mind to Joy," in *Measuring the Immeasurable* – which is chock full of essays from luminaries like James Austin, MD, Larry Dossey, MD, Daniel Goleman, PhD., Candace Pert, PhD, Marilyn Schlitz, PhD, Dan Siegel, MD, Charles Tart, PhD, and Cassandra Vieten, PhD. Check it out at <http://www.amazon.com/Measuring-Immeasurable-Scientific-Case-Spirituality/dp/1591796547>.

3. At Spirit Rock, in 2009, these daylongs with Rick Hanson and Rick Mendius are scheduled:

- **Equanimity**, on Sunday, May 17. Equanimity is the key to freedom from emotional reactions, and to cutting the chain of craving and clinging that leads to suffering. This workshop will also address the neuropsychology of difficult emotions, as well as trauma, and neurologically-informed methods for dealing with those.
- **The Neurodharma of Love**, on Saturday, May 23. The emphasis will be on relationships in general and love in the broadest sense, integrating deep teachings on compassion and lovingkindness with a clear-eyed understanding of how we evolved to be caring toward "us" and often wary and aggressive toward "them."
- **Resting in Emptiness: The Evolution of Awareness and the Transcendence of the Self**, on Saturday, November 7. This workshop will address the thorny and fundamental question of . . . "me, myself, and I." The self – with its tendencies to grasp after possessions and take things personally – is perhaps the premier engine of suffering. We'll explore the evolution of the apparent self in the animal kingdom, and the ways in which the self is real and is also not real at all, coming to rest more and more in the underlying spacious awareness in which self appears and disappears.
- **The Hard Things That Open the Mind and Heart: Practicing with Difficult Conditions**, led with James Baraz, on Sunday, December 13. This is for people grappling with difficult conditions – both internal and external – and for caregivers and friends who support those individuals. These include challenges with the body, mind, and life circumstances. We'll cover Buddhist perspectives and practices

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offerings continued...

for difficult conditions; lovingkindness for oneself and for any being who suffers; brain-savvy ways to strengthen your capacity to be with the hard stuff; and methods from the intersection of the dharma and neuroscience for lifting mood and cultivating joy.

Also in 2009, there are these additional offerings:

4. At the **Aging Artfully: Mind, Body, and Spirit** weekend retreat in Sausalito, California, on March 27-29, Rick will be teaching a workshop on “The Wise Brain: Tools for Happiness, Love, and Wisdom.” See: www.renewalretreats.org/programs/2009_0327/index.htm for more information.
5. At the **Awakening to Mindfulness** conference in San Diego, April 2 – 4, the presenters include Marsha Linehan, Tara Brach, Steven Hayes, Jack Kornfield, and Rick Hanson. 18 continuing education credits are available, and it should be an incredible program. Rick will be presenting two workshops on Friday, April 3: “The Self-Transforming Brain” and “Taking in the Good.” See www.facesconferences.com for more information.
6. At the **Barre Center for Buddhist Studies**, in Barre, MA, on, April 11, Drs. Hanson and Mendius will be offering “Neuro-Dharma: Mindfulness and the Shaping of the Brain.” See https://bcbs.dharma.org/Pages/course_detail.lasso?-KeyValue=58&-Token.Action=&image=1 for more information.
7. At **Kripalu Center**, in Massachusetts, April 12 – 17, Drs. Hanson and Mendius are teaching a weeklong workshop on “The Intimate Brain: Exploring the Neural Circuits of Happiness, Love, and Non-Dual Awareness.” See www.kripalu.org/program/view/IB91/the_intimate_brain_exploring_the_neural_circuits for more information.
8. At **New York Insight Meditation Center**, on April 19, Rick Hanson will be presenting “The Neurodharma of Love.” See <http://nyimc.org/index.php/site/eventcalendar> for more information.
9. At James Baraz’s wonderful **Awakening Joy** course, April 21 and 22, Rick will be a guest speaker. His subject will be how the brain constructs suffering in order to help you survive—and how understanding the mechanisms of that process suggests ways to suffer less.
10. At the **Insight Meditation Community of Washington, DC**, on June 13, Rick Hanson and Tara Brach will present “The Neurodharma of Love.” See www.imcw.org/non-residential-retreats for more information.
11. At the **15th Annual Counseling Skills Conference** in Las Vegas, September 11, Rick will offer a keynote address on The Science of Mindfulness.”
12. With the **Dharma Zephyr Insight Meditation Community** in Nevada, Rick will be leading a two day workshop September 12 and 13 on using brain-savvy methods to steady the mind, quiet it, bring it to singleness, and concentrate it, following the road map of the Buddha. See www.nevadadharma.net/zephyr.html for more information.
13. Through **R. Cassidy Seminars**, Rick will be teaching continuing education workshops to mental health professionals in Los Angeles and San Diego (September 25 & 26), in Portland and Seattle (November 13 & 14). The workshops will focus on translating neuroscience research, informed by contemplative practice, into tools and skills that therapists can offer their clients. See www.ceuregistration.com for more information.
14. At the University of East London, the conference on Mindfulness and Well-Being: From Spirituality to Cognitive Neuroscience will be held on November 20 and 21. Rick will be giving several talks and a workshop. Contact Dr. Patrizia Collard at drcollard@stressminus.co.uk for more information.

***The Wellspring Institute for
Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom***

The Institute is a 501c3 non-profit corporation, and it publishes the Wise Brain Bulletin. The Wellspring Institute gathers, organizes, and freely offers information and methods – supported by brain science and the contemplative disciplines – for greater happiness, love, effectiveness, and wisdom. For more information about the Institute, please go to www.WiseBrain.org.



Fare Well

~ May you and all beings be happy, loving, and wise ~