Pairing Positive and Negative
To Fill the Hole in the Heart

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Rick Hanson, Ph.D.
The Wellspring Institute for Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom
WiseBrain.org  RickHanson.net
drrh@comcast.net
Topics

- Memory consolidation
- Pairing positive and negative
- Antidote experiences
Memory Consolidation
The Machinery of Memory

- When explicit or implicit memory is reactivated, it is **rebuilt** from schematic elements, not retrieved as a whole.

- When attention moves on, elements of the reactivated memory get reconsolidated.

- The open processes of memory reactivation and reconsolidation create a window of opportunity for shaping your internal world.
Reshaping Negative (Implicit and Explicit) Memories

- Rectivated material associates with other things in awareness (e.g., thoughts, sensations), especially if they are prominent and lasting.

- When this material goes back into storage, it takes these associations with it.

- Therefore, you can imbue implicit and explicit memories with positive associations.
Pairing Positive and Negative
The Fourth Step of TIG

When you are having a positive experience:
- Sense the current positive experience sinking down into old pain, and soothing and replacing it.

When you are having a negative experience:
- Bring to mind a positive experience that is its antidote.

In both cases, have the positive experience be big and strong, in the forefront of awareness, while the negative experience is small and in the background.

You are not resisting negative experiences or getting attached to positive ones. You are being kind to yourself and cultivating positive resources in your mind.
TIG4 Capabilities, Resources, Skills

- **Capabilities:**
  - Dividing attention
  - Sustaining awareness of the negative material without getting sucked in (and even retraumatized)

- **Resources:**
  - Self-compassion
  - Internalized sense of affiliation

- **Skills:**
  - Internalizing “antidotes”
  - Accessing “the tip of the root”
Neuropsychology of TIG4

- Extinction, through pairing a negative experience with a powerful positive one.

- Reinforces maintaining PFC-H activation and control during A-SNS arousal, so PFC-H is not swamped or hijacked.

- Reinforcement of self-directed regulation of negative experiences; enhances sense of efficacy.

- Dampens secondary associations to negative material; that reduces negative experiences and behavior, which also reduces vicious cycles.

- Reduces defenses around negative material; thus more amenable to therapeutic help, and to insight.
Antidote Experiences
Psychological Antidotes

**Approaching Opportunities**
- Satisfaction, fulfillment --> Frustration, disappointment
- Gladness, gratitude --> Sadness, discontentment, “blues”

**Affiliating with “Us”**
- Attunement, inclusion --> Not seen, rejected, left out
- Recognition, acknowledgement --> Inadequacy, shame
- Friendship, love --> Abandonment, feeling unloved or unlovable

**Avoiding Threats**
- Strength, efficacy --> Weakness, helplessness, pessimism
- Safety, security --> Alarm, anxiety
- Compassion for oneself and others --> Resentment, anger
The Tip of the Root

For the fourth step of TIG, try to get at the youngest, most vulnerable layer of painful material.

The “tip of the root” is commonly in childhood. In general, the brain is most responsive to negative experiences in early childhood.

Prerequisites
- Understanding the need to get at younger layers
- Compassion and support for the inner child
- Capacity to “presence” young material without flooding
TIG and Trauma

- General considerations:
  - People vary in their resources and their traumas.
  - Often the major action is with “failed protectors.”
  - Cautions for awareness of internal states, including positive
  - Respect “yellow lights” and the client’s pace.

- The first three steps of TIG are generally safe. Use them to build resources for tackling the trauma directly.

- As indicated, use the fourth step of TIG to address the peripheral features and themes of the trauma.

- Then, with care, use the fourth step to get at the heart of the trauma.

First of all, do no harm.
Keep a green bough in your heart, and a singing bird will come.
Lao Tsu
Great Books

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Hanson, R. 2008. Seven facts about the brain that incline the mind to joy. In *Measuring the immeasurable: The scientific case for spirituality*. Sounds True.
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