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# ***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](http://WiseBrain.org) [RickHanson.net](http://RickHanson.net)

[drh@comcast.net](mailto:drh@comcast.net)

# Topics

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- **Memory consolidation**
- **Pairing positive and negative**
- **Antidote experiences**



# Memory Consolidation

# The Machinery of Memory

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- 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

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- Reactivated 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

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- 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

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## ■ 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

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- 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

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## 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

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- 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

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- 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.*

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

Lao Tsu

# Great Books

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See [www.RickHanson.net](http://www.RickHanson.net) for other great books.

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- 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.
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- Sapolsky, R. 2004. *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*. Holt.
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# Key Papers - 1

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See [www.RickHanson.net](http://www.RickHanson.net) for other scientific papers.

- Atmanspacher, H. & Graben, P. 2007. Contextual emergence of mental states from neurodynamics. *Chaos & Complexity Letters*, 2:151-168.
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- Tang, Y.-Y., Ma, Y., Wang, J., Fan, Y., Feng, S., Lu, Q., Yu, Q., Sui, D., Rothbart, M.K., Fan, M., & Posner, M. 2007. Short-term meditation training improves attention and self-regulation. *PNAS*, 104:17152-17156.
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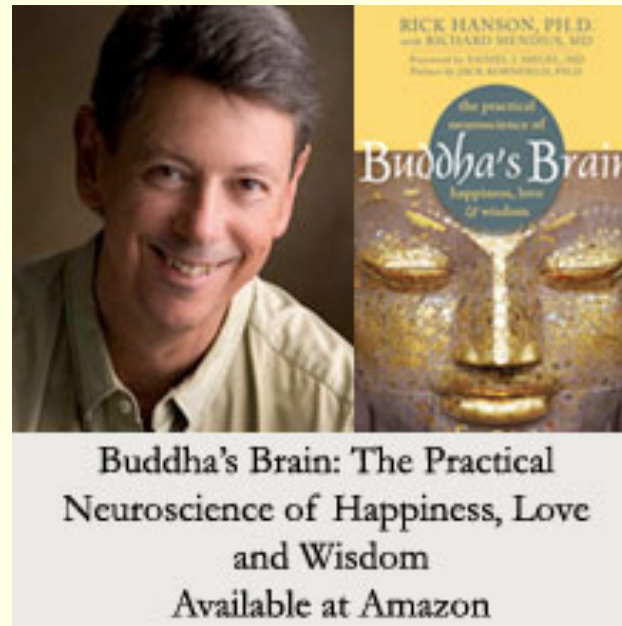
## *Where to Find Rick Hanson Online*

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