

## Neuroplasticity – Dr. Rick Hanson

Build new neural pathways by using your mind to change your brain to change your mind.

- What fires together, wires together.
- Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to change and be flexible, depending on its environment—external - connection to what is outside of myself. Internal - thinking, rest, how do I process the world?
- How do I go into relaxation response to create a safe internal environment? Often, we are engaged in a threat response because of bombardment. How do I regulate my nervous system?
- **Let Be, Let Go, Let in!** What do you set your mind on - worries, self-criticism, anger, anxiety, or noticing you are basically ok - seeing the good in yourself and regularly resting your mind on gratitude and taking in moments of goodness, therefore creating calm, strength, self-confidence, and inner peace.
- **Have a beneficial experience** – Notice one you already have, or create one by thinking of something you feel grateful for.
- **Enrich it** – Stay with it; open to it in your body; enjoy it!
- **Absorb it** – Intend and sense that the experiences sinking into you like water into a sponge, becoming a part of you.
- Essentially, there are three fundamental ways to engage the mind:
- **Be with what's there Experience the experience, feel the feelings.** Let contents in awareness – sounds, sights, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts– come and go without attempting to change them in any way.
- Prevent, eliminate, or decrease what's (pragmatically) negative, softening around it, relaxing, intending and helping it to release. Seeing through untrue, negative thoughts; letting go of unhelpful, wrong beliefs. Imagery, imagining that the negative is washing out of you.
- Create, maintain, or increase what's (pragmatically) positive, noticing, foregrounding, and bringing attention to beneficial “tiles” in the mosaic of experience and thinking of things that call up a beneficial experience
- Enrich and sustain the experience.
- Stay with it, bring attention back to it, and help it last.
- If we think of the mind like a garden, these three excellent practices are:
- **Witness the garden – let be**
- **Pull weeds – let go**
- **Grow flowers – let in**
- If we practice appropriately, we can overcome our brain's negativity bias. Be on your own side and treat yourself the way you would treat your friends - with kindness and compassion. Your needs and dreams matter.

