

CHANGE YOUR MIND, CHANGE YOUR BRAIN

In *Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love & Wisdom*, neuropsychologist Rick Hanson explains how to use scientific breakthroughs, combined with techniques from ancient contemplative practices to change your brain for greater contentment, lovingkindness, and inner peace.

"...This gently encouraging 'practical guide to your brain' offers helpful information supported by research as well as steps to change instinctive patterns..."

—Publishers Weekly

Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and other great teachers were born with brains built essentially like anyone else's. Then they used their minds to change their brains in ways that changed history. With the new breakthroughs in neuroscience, combined with the insights from thousands of years of contemplative practice, you, too, can shape your own brain for greater happiness, love, and wisdom. In his new book, **BUDDHA'S BRAIN** (New Harbinger Publications, paperback, November 2009) Rick Hanson, Ph.D., offers a series of series of simple, practical ways to rewire your brain. Using only the power of thought you can strengthen your brain's innate circuitry for greater well-being and better performance. Hanson also provides a guided tour of the exciting recent research that reveals how the brain can change and adapt, and he gives down-to-earth explanations for how we can use lessons from the world's ancient contemplative traditions as tools for personal healing and growth in the 21st century.

STORY/SEGMENT IDEAS

STRESS-PROOF YOUR BRAIN

HOW TO DEVELOP GREATER RESILIENCE AND INNER STRENGTH FOR THE ROLLER COASTER OF LIFE

Hanson will:

- Offer a lay-person's primer on the neuroscience of stress, and explain how today's turbulent times are lighting up our stress circuits like a Christmas tree
- Provide simple, step-by-step exercises for making the brain and body less susceptible to stress and for on-the-spot stress relief
- Explain how cultivating love and compassion for self and others can help to calm stress and anxiety
- Offer brain-savvy methods for feeling less irritable, sad, and defensive

DID EVOLUTION WIRE OUR BRAINS FOR UNHAPPINESS?

YES, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE UNHAPPY, SAYS THE AUTHOR OF *BUDDHA'S BRAIN*

Hanson will:

- Explain why our brains evolved to be "like Velcro for negative experiences but Teflon for positive ones"
- Discuss how we are wired to overreact to emotionally threatening situations
- Show how to reverse the brain's evolutionary bias toward unhappiness and negativity
- Reveal how paying attention to and "taking in" the small but positive experiences of daily life rewires the brain for happiness
- Describe how our "home base"—the deep nature of our nervous system—is characterized by the "five C's," consciousness, calm, contentment, caring, and creativity, and how to stop being driven from home by stress and "Threat Level Orange."

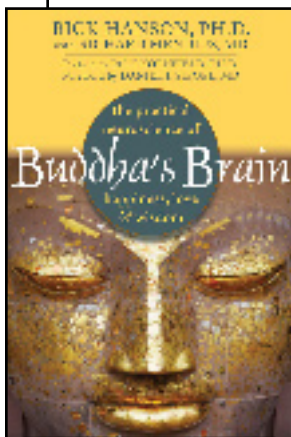
LOVE, SEX, AND INTIMACY ON THE BRAIN

HOW TO REWIRE YOUR BRAIN FOR BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Hanson will:

- Reveal how scientific findings show that love and relationships have been the primary driver of human brain development
- Offer step-by-step methods for practicing compassionate conflict resolution and forgiveness

-more-



PRESS CONTACT

Lorna Garano
lorna@lornagarano.com
510-922-9765
Lorna Garano Book
Publicity

BOOK INFO

Buddha's Brain:
The Practical
Neuroscience of
Happiness, Love &
Wisdom
Rick Hanson, Ph.D.
with
Richard Mendius, MD
Preface by Jack
Kornfield, Ph.D.
Foreword by Daniel J.
Siegel, MD
November 2009
New Harbinger
Publications
978-1-57224-6959
Paperback, \$16.95
233 pages

WEB

www.rickhanson.net
www.wisebrain.org

INSIDE

About the authors.....2
Suggested interview
questions.....2
Praise.....3

- Explain how to develop the three main neural circuits that affect our capacity for empathy
- Provide a primer on the neurochemistry of sex and love
- Discuss the two wolves of the heart—the wolf of love and the wolf of hate—and explain how to feed the former and starve the latter

.....

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON MINDFULNESS

MODERN SCIENCE SHOWS HOW MINDFULNESS CAN HELP US BE HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER

Hanson will:

- Discuss the exciting science that shows how the brain can change and how this can give us greater control over our own happiness and well being
- Offer mindfulness meditations and other simple techniques for rewiring the brain for greater serenity and happiness
- Explain how to adapt ancient meditation techniques for better performance at home and work and in relationships
- Reveal the health benefits of mindfulness
- Offer a lay person’s primer on neuropsychology and explain how to tailor a mindfulness program to your particular temperament
- Explain why Buddhist practices like mindfulness and meditation are becoming part of mainstream Western psychology

.....

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rick Hanson, Ph.D., is a neuropsychologist and meditation teacher. A summa cum laude graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles, he cofounded the Wellspring Institute for Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom and edits the Wise Brain Bulletin. He and his wife have two children.

Richard Mendius, MD, is a neurologist and cofounder of the Wellspring Institute for Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom. He has taught medicine at University of California, Los Angeles, and Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA. He also teaches weekly



Rick Hanson, Ph.D.

.....

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In *Buddha’s Brain* you talk about how psychology, neurology, and contemplative practice are intersecting to create an exciting new field that is yielding surprising findings about how we can take charge of our well being. Tell us about this. What do some of the most notable studies in this area tell us? How does meditation and mindfulness change the brain? How can ordinary people benefit from them?
2. You start your book by saying “When your mind changes, your brain changes.” Scientists have long grappled with the difference between the brain and the mind and exactly how the two interrelate. Can you explain the latest thinking on this?
3. You say that “Your brain is like Velcro for negative experiences but Teflon for positive ones.” What do you mean?

-more-

Press contact: Lorna Garano, lorna@lornagarano.com, 510-922-9765

4. If our brains have an inherent bias toward the negative can we really hope to change them in any long-lasting way?
5. What are the parasympathetic nervous system and the sympathetic nervous system and what role does each play in handling stress?
6. You draw on the Buddhist theory of the Three Poisons of greed, hatred, and delusion. How do these “poisons” manifest themselves and what effect do they have on our well being, our relationships, and our ability to succeed and achieve our life goals?
7. In *Buddha's Brain* you have a chapter entitled “The Evolution of Suffering” in which you say that everyday stress, irritation, and anxiety are a form of suffering. What do you mean?
8. You say that three evolutionary strategies that best helped us survive are also behind much of our suffering. Can you explain?
9. You claim that life has unavoidable “first darts,” like disease and old age, but that most of our unhappiness and stress is due to the “second darts” that we throw at ourselves in the form of our reactions to pain and misfortune. Are you saying we make ourselves suffer and, if so, what we can we do about it?
10. Mindfulness is a core concept in both Western psychology and in contemplative traditions. It's also in the news a lot these days. What is mindfulness and what goes on inside our brain when we're mindful?
11. Mindfulness is increasingly viewed a source of peak performance in the business and academic world. Can you explain why?
12. New technology, such as MRI machines, have given us a new window into the brain. Can you explain what these are and how they work? Can they read our minds?
13. Can you walk us through a mindfulness technique that can be used any time stress hits?
14. In *Buddha's Brain* you discuss the neuropsychology of empathy and how to develop greater empathy for self and others. Tell us more about how we can do this and why we should?
15. You say that the brain has powerful, natural capacities to understand others and feel close to them. If that's true why do so many people feel misunderstood and why is there so much loneliness and conflict in the world?
16. Can you talk about the neurochemistry of sex and love and also about the impact that relationships have had on brain development throughout our evolution?
17. What is self-compassion and why do you say it's more powerful than self-esteem?
18. In *Buddha's Brain* you say that calm is good, but equanimity is better. Can you explain the difference and tell us how we can cultivate equanimity?

-more-

Press contact: Lorna Garano, lorna@lornagarano.com, 510-922-9765

19. We're living in a highly stressful time. Many of us are anxious about our economic futures and the world seems increasingly unstable. First, can cultivating a more Buddha-like brain really help relieve the intense stress that so many people feel today because of outside pressures? Second, do you believe that these changes on the individual level can have a social and political impact?

20. In *Buddha's Brain* you draw on the contemplative tradition of many of the world's religions and look to those who mastered them. What do you think we can learn from the great spiritual masters, given that our lives are so different from theirs?

PRAISE FOR *BUDDHA'S BRAIN*

"...This gently encouraging 'practical guide to your brain' offers helpful information supported by research as well as steps to change instinctive patterns..."

—**Publishers Weekly**

"An excellent choice for readers wishing to take control of their lives and spiritual well-being."

—**Library Journal**

"*Buddha's Brain* is compelling, easy to read, and quite educational. The book skillfully answers the central question of each of our lives—how to be happy—by presenting the core precepts of Buddhism integrated with a primer on how our brains function. This book will be helpful to anyone wanting to understand time-tested ways of skillful living backed up by up-to-date science."

—**Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.**, author of *Forgive for Good* and director of Stanford Forgiveness Projects

"...*Buddha's Brain* clearly describes how modern concepts of evolutionary and cognitive neurobiology support core Buddhist teachings and practice. This book should have great appeal for those seeking a secular spiritual path, while also raising many testable hypotheses for interested neuroscientists."

—**Jerome Engel, Jr., MD, Ph.D.**, Jonathan Sinay Distinguished Professor of Neurology, Neurobiology, and Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles

"An illuminating guide to the emerging confluence of cutting-edge neuropsychology and ancient Buddhist wisdom filled with practical suggestions on how to gradually rewire your brain for greater happiness. Lucid, good-humored, and easily accessible."

—**John J. Prendergast, Ph.D.**, adjunct associate professor of psychology at California Institute of Integral Studies and senior Editor of *The Sacred Mirror* and *Listening from the Heart of Silence*

"A wonderfully comprehensive book. The authors have made it easy to understand how our minds function and how to make changes so that we can live happier, fuller lives."

—**Sharon Salzberg**, author of *Lovingkindness*

"*Buddha's Brain* brilliantly reveals the teachings of the Buddha in the light of modern neuroscience. This is a practical guide to changing your reality. This is your brain on Dharma!"

—**Wes 'Scoop' Nisker**, author of *Essential Crazy Wisdom* and editor of *Inquiring Mind*

"*Buddha's Brain* makes a significant contribution to the current dynamic dialogue among neuroscience, psychology, and Buddhist disciplines of mind training. Drawing on the wisdom born of their own meditation practice and their scientific backgrounds, the authors point again and again to the possibilities of the deep transformation of our minds and lives."

—**Christina Feldman**, author of *Compassion* and *The Buddhist Path to Simplicity*

Press contact: Lorna Garano, lorna@lornagarano.com, 510-922-9765

“With the mind of a scientist, the perspective of a psychologist, and the wise heart of a parent and devoted meditator, Rick Hanson has created a guide for all of us who want to learn about and apply the scintillating new research that embraces neurology, psychology and authentic spiritual inquiry. Up-to-date discoveries combined with state-of-the-art practices make this book an engaging read. *Buddha’s Brain* is at the top of my list!”

—**Richard A. Heckler, Ph.D.**, assistant professor at John F. Kennedy University, Pleasant Hill, CA

“*Buddha’s Brain* is a significant contribution to understanding the interface between science and meditation in the path of transformation. Illuminating.”

—**Joseph Goldstein**, author of *A Heart Full of Peace* and *One Dharma*

“Recent developments in psychology and the neurosciences have led to clear and powerful insights about how our brains work and how these neurological functions shape our experience of the world. These insights are profoundly congruent with the wisdom that has been developed over thousands of years in the contemplative traditions. The authors of *Buddha’s Brain* have given us a concise and practical guide to how these two currents of knowledge can be used to transform our capacity to engage both ourselves and others with wisdom, compassion, and mindfulness.”

—**Robert D. Truog, MD**, professor at Harvard Medical School, executive director of the Institute for Professionalism and Ethical Practice, and senior associate in critical care medicine at Children’s Hospital, Boston

“I wish I had a science teacher like Rick Hanson when I went to school. *Buddha’s Brain* is at once fun, fascinating, and profound. It not only shows us effective ways to develop real happiness in our lives, but also explains physiologically how and why they work. As Dr. Hanson instructs us to do with positive experiences, take in all the good information this book offers and savor it.”

—**James Baraz**, author of *Awakening Joy* and cofounder of Spirit Rock Meditation Center

“This is simply the best book I have read on why and how we can shape our brains to be peaceful and happy. This is a book that will literally change your brain and your life.”

—**Jennifer Louden**, author of *The Woman’s Comfort Book* and *The Life Organizer*

“This book enables us to understand the whys and hows of our human operating system so we can make more informed actions that allow us to live our lives more fully, compassionately, and with greater well-being and kindness towards others and ourselves. What I find exciting about *Buddha’s Brain* is Rick Hanson’s ability to clearly delineate the root causes of suffering and explain pertinent ways we can actually change these causes and effect lasting change on all levels of our mind, body, and interpersonal relationships. His informative, relaxed and easy-to-read style of writing made me want to pick this book up again and again and dive ever more deeply into the complexities of our human engineering. *Buddha’s Brain* is now on my recommendation list for all my students and teachers-in-training.”

—**Richard C. Miller, Ph.D.**, founding president of Integrative Restoration Institute

“Solidly grounded in the latest neuroscientific research, and supported by a deep understanding of contemplative practice, this book is accessible, compelling, and profound—a crystallization of practical wisdom!”

—**Philip David Zelazo, Ph.D.**, Nancy M. and John E. Lindahl Professor, Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota

“*Buddha’s Brain* will show you how mental practices, informed by the contemplative traditions, can increase your capacity for experiencing happiness and peace. This book provides a scientific understanding of these methods, and clear guidance for practices that cultivate a wise and free heart.”

—**Tara Brach, Ph.D.**, author of *Radical Acceptance*

“A clear introduction to some basic principles of neuroscience and dharma.”

—**Roger Walsh, MD, Ph.D.**, professor at the University of California, Irvine, and author of *Essential Spirituality*

Press contact: Lorna Garano, lorna@lornagarano.com, 510-922-9765