Growing Inner Resources
For a Challenging World

ITRC
Building Human Resilience
For Climate Change
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Rick Hanson, Ph.D.
Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley
www.RickHanson.net
It’s Good to Grow the Good Inside
What Shapes a Person’s Course?

Challenges
Holding carbon producers accountable

Analyzing the amount of carbon that the fossil fuel and cement industries have extracted from the ground, Heede found that more than 60% of emissions since the Industrial Revolution can be traced to the “carbon majors”—companies producing at least 8 million tons of carbon a year.

Cumulative emissions (million metric tons of CO₂)

1. U.S. government breaks up Standard Oil; Chevron and ExxonMobil are descendants.
2. Iran nationalizes Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.
4. Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries imposes oil embargo on United States.
5. Soviet gas production is privatized as Gazprom.

What Shapes a Person’s Course?

Challenges

Vulnerabilities
What Shapes a Person’s Course?

Challenges
Vulnerabilities
Resources
Where Are Resources Located?

World
Where Are Resources Located?

World

Body
Where Are Resources Located?

World

Body

Mind
Some Mental Resources

- **Understandings** – insight into self and others
- **Capabilities** – self-regulation, social skills
- **Positive emotions** – gratitude, love, delight
- **Attitudes** – confidence, optimism, tolerance
- **Motivations** – helping others, wanting to learn
- **Virtues** – patience, generosity, courage, kindness
MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS ON THE FRONT LINES
CLIMATE CHANGE = HUMAN DISTRESS
The harder a person’s life, the more challenges one faces, the more important it is to grow inner strengths.
How to do it?
Two wolves in the heart
Inner Strengths Are Built From Brain Structure
How do you get these inner strengths into your brain?
States and Traits
Neurons that fire together, wire together.
We grow beneficial traits - like resilience, compassion, and courage - by hardwiring experiences of them into the brain.

From state to trait
Traits are more reliable than states.

You take them with you wherever you go.
The problem is, most people have many good states that never become good traits.

This is a limitation in much psychotherapy, human resources training, coaching, character education, and mindfulness programs.
Meanwhile, stressful, painful, harmful experiences are being rapidly converted into lasting changes in neural structure or function.
The Negativity Bias

During the 600 million year evolution of the nervous system, avoiding “sticks” was usually more consequential than getting “carrots.”

1. So we scan for bad news,
2. Over-focus on it,
3. Over-react to it,
4. Install it quickly in implicit memory,
5. Sensitize the brain to the negative, and
6. Create vicious cycles with others.
Velcro for Bad, Teflon for Good

The negativity bias
The brain is good at learning from bad experiences but it’s bad at learning from good ones.

Even though learning from good experiences is what grows inner strengths.
The Negativity Bias
Stone age brains in the 21st century
What can we do?
Getting the Good Stuff into Your Brain
Turning States into Traits
Let’s Try It

- **Notice** that you are alright right now.
  - Have the experience.
  - Enrich it.
  - Absorb it.

- **Create** the experience of compassion.
  - Have the experience.
  - Enrich it.
  - Absorb it.
Have a Good Experience
Absorb It
Like a Nice Fire
Link Positive and Negative [optional]
Have It, Enjoy It
HEAL Yourself

Activation

1. **Have** a beneficial experience.

Installation

2. **Enrich** it.

3. **Absorb** it.

4. **Link** positive and negative material. [optional]
Core Strengths for Resilience
The Evolving Brain

The Triune Brain - (P. MacLean 1990)
Meeting Our Three Core Needs

Avoiding harms for safety

Approaching rewards for satisfaction

Attaching to others for connection
Examples of Need, Challenge, Resource

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Resource</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
<td>Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Goal success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
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Core Strengths

Peace

Contentment

Love
Pet the Lizard
Feed the Mouse
Hug the Monkey
It’s Good to Take in the Good
Benefits

- Growing inner resources
- Sense of agency
- Kindness to yourself
- Sensitizing the brain to positive
- Creating positive cycles
Study on the HEAL Process

- A randomized waitlist control study on the Taking in the Good course (46 subjects), not yet peer-reviewed.

- Course participants, compared to the control group, reported significantly more Contentment, Self-Esteem, Satisfaction with Life, Savoring, and Gratitude.

- After the 7-week course and at 2-month follow-up, pooled participants also reported significantly more Love, Compassion, Self-Compassion, Mindfulness, Self-Control, Positive Rumination, Joy, Amusement, Awe, and Happiness – and less Anxiety and Depression.
Societal Benefits

As we develop inner resources including peace, contentment, and love, we become harder to manipulate by fear and anger, greed and drivenness, and “us” vs. “them” rivalries.
In Closing
Think not lightly of good, saying, “It will not come to me.”

Drop by drop is the water pot filled.

Likewise, the wise one, gathering it little by little, fills oneself with good.

Dhammapada 9.122
Let good facts become good experiences.
Savor the experience
Sense the experience sinking into you.
Taking in the good helps you.
Taking in the good helps others.
Taking in the good helps the world.
Thank you
Additional Materials
Selected References - 1

See www.RickHanson.net/key-papers/ for other suggested readings.


Selected References - 3


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The Four Ways to Offer a Method

- Doing it implicitly
- Teaching it and then leaving it up to the person
- Doing it explicitly with the person
- Asking the person to do it on his or her own
# HEAL in Classes, Trainings, Families

- Take a few minutes to explain it and teach it.

- In the flow, encourage enriching and absorbing, using natural language.

- Encourage people to use HEAL on their own.

- Do HEAL on regular occasions (e.g., at the end of a therapy session, meals, just before bed).
Resources for Avoiding harms

**Challenge**
- Weakness
- Helplessness
- Freezing, immobilization
- Inflated threats
- Alarm
- Tension
- Worry, fear
- Irritation, anger

**Resource**
- Strength
- Agency
- Action, venting
- Accurate appraisal
- Protection, calming
- Relaxation
- Feeling alright now, making a plan
- Big picture, peace
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Challenge</strong></th>
<th><strong>Resource</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I don’t have</td>
<td>What I do have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarcity</td>
<td>Enoughness, fullness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed, sad</td>
<td>Gratitude, gladness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration, failure</td>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored, numb</td>
<td>Pleasure, excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>Loved and loving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving up</td>
<td>Aspire, lived by good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drivenness</td>
<td>Already satisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Left out, excluded</td>
<td>Belonging, wanted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequacy, shame</td>
<td>Appreciated, respected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ignored, unseen</td>
<td>Receiving empathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>Friendship, caring</td>
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<td>to others and oneself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resentment</td>
<td>Recognize it hurts you</td>
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<tr>
<td>Envy, jealousy</td>
<td>Self-compassion, take</td>
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<td>action, good will</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling stifled</td>
<td>Skillful assertiveness</td>
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