RICK HANSON, PhD

Senior Fellow of UC Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center

New York Times Bestselling Author

Clinical Psychologist and Meditation Teacher

Brain-based tools for lasting well-being in a changing world.
For thousands of years, philosophers, poets, mystics, and ordinary people have wondered about human experience:

**What is the source of our thoughts, emotions, and desires - and even the sense of “me”?**

The human brain is perhaps the most complex object known to science. New research in psychology and neurology is revealing tight connections between what we are feeling and what the brain is doing. It has been called an *enchanted loom*, continually weaving the tapestry of experience.

**Your brain has a remarkable capacity to change and improve over time. There’s a famous saying that “neurons that fire together, wire together.”**

Repeated patterns of mental activity require repeated patterns of brain activity, which over time actually change neural structure and function. This means that you can **use your mind to change your brain to change your mind for the better.**

“Offers simple, accessible, practical steps for touching the peace and joy that are every person’s birthright.”
—Thich Nhat Hanh

“Rick Hanson’s brilliance is the capacity to offer practical, powerful, scientifically-grounded practices that lead to true happiness and a loving heart.”
—Tara Brach, Ph.D.

“Teaches how to develop durable psychological resources to become resilient in this modern, hectic world.”
—Mark Hyman, M.D.

“Rick Hanson has a rare ability to inspire us to our fullest potential while giving us practical, actionable tools for our everyday lives.”
—Marie Forleo

“One of the world’s leading authorities on mind training.”
—Paul Gilbert, Ph.D., O.B.E.

“Offers an easy-to-follow roadmap for creating day-to-day inner peace.”
—Lori Gottlieb, MFT

“Brilliant at making complex scientific information simple.”
—Harville Hendrix, Ph.D.
NEW FROM RICK HANSON, PhD:

NEURODHARMA
New Science, Ancient Wisdom, and Seven Practices of the Highest Happiness

Throughout history, people have sought the heights of human potential. And now recent science is revealing how these remarkable ways of being are based on equally remarkable changes in our own nervous system, making them more attainable than ever before.

In *Neurodharma*, Dr. Rick Hanson will take you on a journey that not only explores the new neuroscience of awakening, but also offers a bold yet plausible plan for reverse-engineering peak experiences, sense of oneness, and even enlightenment itself.

The breakthroughs of the great teachers are not reserved for the chosen few. Dr. Hanson shares seven practices for embodying them ourselves in daily life to handle stress, heal old pain, feel at ease with others, and rest in the sense of our natural goodness. By strengthening the neural circuitry of profound contentment and inner peace, you’ll cultivate unshakable presence of mind, a courageous heart, and serenity in a changing world.

Dr. Hanson offers a fascinating, inspiring vision of who we can be – and an effective path for fulfilling this wonderful possibility.

In Bookstores May 5, 2020

Rick Hanson, Ph.D., is a psychologist, Senior Fellow of UC Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center, and *New York Times* bestselling author. His books have been published in 29 languages and include *Neurodharma*, *Resilient*, *Hardwiring Happiness*, *Buddha’s Brain*, *Just One Thing*, and *Mother Nurture* – with 900,000 copies in English alone. He’s lectured at NASA, Google, Oxford, and Harvard, and taught in meditation centers worldwide. His work has been featured on the BBC, CBS, and NPR.

Website: RickHanson.net

Podcast: BeingWell

Speaking Inquiries: rick@rickhanson.net

RICKHANSON.NET/NEURODHARMA
“Perhaps the most stunning marriage of ancient wisdom and modern science ever written.”
—Joan Borysenko, author of *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind*

“A brilliant and unprecedented offering, *Neurodharma* will guide you to the upper reaches of your potential as a human being.”
—Deepak Chopra, MD, *NYT* bestselling author of *You Are the Universe* and *MetaHuman*

“In *Neurodharma*, Rick Hanson displays his mastery as a teacher. Rich with personal challenges and transformative experiences, these practices may unburden and free the reader.”
—Stephen W. Porges, PhD, Founding Director of the Traumatic Stress Research Consortium

“A fascinating synthesis that shows how to train the mind to transform the brain toward health and flourishing.”
—Daniel J. Siegel, MD, *NYT* bestselling author of *Aware* and *Mind*

“A brilliant and practical synthesis of wisdom and science, a must read for anyone who is interested in deep personal growth or making this a better world.”
—Shawn Achor, happiness researcher and *NYT* bestselling author of *Big Potential*

“With great lucidity, this impressive work offers a wide range of teaching instructions that help us realize our highest aspirations.”
—Joseph Goldstein, author of *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening*

“Rick Hanson’s seven steps of awakening are a remarkable presentation of how the brain, mindfulness, and meditation are interconnected.”
—Sharon Salzberg, author of *Lovingkindness* and *Real Change*

“Filled with wise and beautiful ways to train the heart and mind.”
—Jack Kornfield, PhD, author of *A Path with Heart*

“This book sparkles with actionable practices, scientific delights, and deep, focused reflection upon what is truly the highest happiness.”
—Dacher Keltner, PhD, founder of the Greater Good Science Center; author of *Born to Be Good*
With the coronavirus pandemic moving through America and the rest of the world, how can people feel less anxious?

What is the difference between useful caution and excessive anxiety?

What are your personal go-tos for tapping into calm strength?

How do you talk with people who think you ought to be more upset and alarmed than you are?

How did you get interested in psychology and brain science?

The rap against psychology, meditation, self-help, etc. is that these are airy-fairy and also self-indulgent. What do you say to that? What can you offer to people who are dealing with a hard life each day?

You often say “mindfulness isn’t enough.” What do you mean by that?

Why is it useful to bring in brain science? Is it hard to understand? Can people actually change their brain for the better?

I understand that you have taught this material in 10-day meditation retreats. That’s pretty intense. What about ten minutes a day, or even less: can people still benefit from these practices in little bites?

How do our thoughts and feelings change the brain?

You say the brain is like Velcro for bad experiences but Teflon for good ones. Why do we have this “negativity bias?” What can we do about it?

You emphasize building inner strengths such as grit, gratitude, and self-worth. How much of these can a person actually grow? Aren’t we sort of stuck with our temperament?

How could a person grow an inner strength like patience or confidence over time?

If someone is willing to try your ideas for five minutes a day, what would you suggest they do?

Your new book Neurodharma features seven practices of the “highest happiness.” What do you mean by “the highest happiness” and how do these seven practices help people?

Looking around the world today, what do you think is the biggest challenge?
I've hiked a lot in the mountains, and sometimes a friend farther up the trail has turned and looked back and encouraged me onward. Such a friendly gesture: *Come join me... watch out for the slippery ice... you can do it!* I've often thought about those moments while writing this book, which is about the heights of human potential: about being as wise and strong, happy and loving, as any person can ever be. If those heights are like a great mountain, *awakening* is the magnificent journey that carries you along toward the top. Many real people have gone very far up and I imagine them turning with a sweet smile and beckoning us to join them.

Those who have climbed this mountain come from different cultures and have different personalities, but they all seem alike to me in seven ways. They are mindful; they are kind; they live with contentment and emotional balance through even the hardest times; they are whole and authentic; they are present here and now; they speak of feeling connected with everything; and a light shines through them that does not seem entirely their own.

These individuals are models to us of what is possible. They are down-to-earth, humorous, realistic, and supportive — not the cartoon-like stereotype of exotic characters in caves making cryptic pronouncements. They have no interest in celebrity. Some have taken a spiritual approach while others have been secular. Their realization is genuine, and it’s the result of the *path* they’ve traveled, not some unique transformation that’s unattainable for the rest of us. Through their own example, they demonstrate that wonderful ways of being lie ahead, that accessible paths lead onward, and that much as their own efforts were fruitful, ours will be, too.

And, remarkably, you can see some of their qualities already deep down inside yourself, even if they’re sometimes covered over by stresses and distractions. These ways of being are not reserved for the few — they are opportunities for all of us.

There are many traditions, which are like many routes up the mountain of awakening. Nonetheless, on each of these routes, we find the same steps taken again and again: steps of steadiness, lovingness, fullness, wholeness, nowness, allness, and timelessness. This is some of the most profound and perhaps sacred territory there is. It is ultimately beyond science and logic, so words about it can be loose, metaphorical, and poetic.

The complete development of these seven ways of being marks the pinnacle of human possibility, which could be called enlightenment or full awakening. Meanwhile, even the first simple sense of them is very useful in everyday life. For instance, while dealing with stressful challenges, it’s so good to rest in the fullness of feeling *already* peaceful, happy, and loved. And whether it is for the beginning of the path or its end, today we have an unprecedented opportunity to explore a kind of reverse-engineering of awakening that is grounded in the living body.